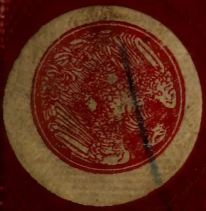

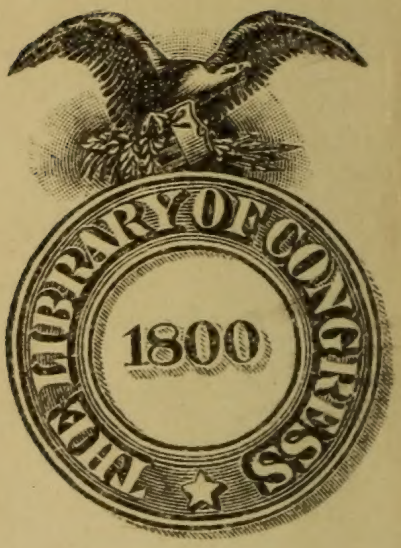

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THE

WORKS

OF

GRAY.

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ultum et veræ gloriæ, quamvis uno libro, meruit.
Quinctilian.

15-18385

LONDON:
Printed by Thomas Davison, Whitefriars.

Be thine despair & Sceptred care;
To triumph & to die are mine.

Page 24.

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Printed for F. C. & I. Rivington, & the other Proprietors,
August 26, 1821.

THE

Works of

THOMAS GRAY,

with Memoirs of his Life & Writings

By

W. MASON, M.A.

T. Uwins del. A.W. Warren sculp.

What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

page 3.

LONDON.

Printed for F. C. and J. Rivington,
and the other Proprietors, Aug.t 26.
1821.

THE

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OF

THOMAS GRAY;

Containing his

POEMS, AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH SEVERAL EMINENT LITERARY CHARACTERS.

To which are added,

MEMOIRS

OF HIS

LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY W. MASON, M.A.

LONDON:

Printed for F. C. and J. Rivington; J. Nunn; Cadell and Davies; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; G. and W. B. Whittaker; J. Richardson; J. Walker; Newman and Co.; Lackington and Co.; Black, Kingsbury, Parbury, and Allen; Black, Young, and Young; Sherwood, Neely, and Jones; Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy; J. Robinson; E. Edwards; Simpkin and Marshall; R. Scholey; and G. Cowie.

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GRAY'S POEMS.

ODE I.

ON THE SPRING.

LO! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
  Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
  And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring:
  While, whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,
  Cool Zephyrs through the clear blue sky
Their gather'd fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
  A broader browner, shade;
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
  O'er-canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state)
  How vain the ardour of the Crowd,
  How low, how little are the Proud,
How indigent the Great!

Still is the toiling hand of Care:
The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how through the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gaily-gilded trim
Quick-glancing to the sun.

To Contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of Man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the Busy and the Gay
But flutter through life's little day,
In fortune's varying colours drest:
Brush'd by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chill'd by Age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
We frolic, while 'tis May.

ODE II.

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT,

Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes.

'TWAS on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers, that blow;
  Demurest of the tabby kind,
  The pensive Selima reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
  Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
  Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
  Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
  Through richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
  She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize.
  What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled)
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood,
She mew'd to ev'ry wat'ry God,
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd:
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.
A Fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;
Nor all, that glisters, gold.

ODE III.

ON A

DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

Ανθρωπος' ἱκανὴ πρόφασις εἰς τὸ δυστυχεῖν.
Menander.

YE distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the wat'ry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's * holy shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way!

Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shade!
Ah fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood stray'd
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

---

* King Henry the Sixth, Founder of the College.

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
  Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margent green
  The paths of pleasure trace,
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthrall?
  What idle progeny succeed
  To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

While some on earnest business bent
  Their murm'ring labours ply
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
  To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry:
  Still as they run they look behind,
  They hear a voice in every wind,
And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs, by fancy fed,
  Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
  The sunshine of the breast:
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever-new,
And lively cheer of vigour born;
  The thoughtless day, the easy night,
  The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas! regardless of their doom,
  The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
  Nor care beyond to-day:
Yet see how all around 'em wait
The Ministers of human fate,

And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, show them where in ambush stand
To seize their prey the murth'rous band!
Ah, tell them they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame that sculks behind;
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the secret heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,
And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
And grinning Infamy.
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
That mocks the tear it forced to flow;
And keen Remorse with blood defiled,
And moody Madness laughing wild
Amid severest woe.

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
A griesly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
More hideous than their Queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every labouring sinew strains,
Those in the deeper vitals rage:
Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming Age.

To each his suff'rings: all are men,
Condemn'd alike to groan;

The tender for another's pain,
  Th' unfeeling for his own.
Yet ah! why should they know their fate?
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies.
  Thought would destroy their paradise.
  No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.

ODE IV.

TO ADVERSITY.

———— Ζῆνα
Τὸν φρονεῖν Βροτοὺς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τῷ πάθει μαθὰν
Θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.
Æschylus, in Agamemnone.

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless Power,
Thou Tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour
The Bad affright, afflict the Best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain
The Proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple Tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling Child, design'd,
To thee he gave the heav'nly Birth,
And bad to form her infant mind.
Stern rugged Nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learn'd to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good.

Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer Friend, the flatt'ring Foe;
By vain Prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb array'd,
Immersed in rapt'rous thought profound,
And Melancholy, silent maid,
With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend:
Warm Charity, the general Friend,
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh, gently on thy Suppliant's head,
Dread Goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
Nor circled with the vengeful Band
(As by the Impious thou art seen)
With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty.

Thy form benign, oh Goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic Train be there
To soften, not to wound my heart.
The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself a Man.

ODE V.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

Pindaric *.

Φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν ἐς
Δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἑρμηνέων χατὶζει.
Pindar, Olymp. II.

I. 1.

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
† From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:

---

* When the author first published this and the following Ode, he was advised, even by his friends, to subjoin some few explanatory notes; but had too much respect for the understanding of his readers to take that liberty.

† The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which gives life and lustre to all it touches, are here described; its quiet majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers; and its more rapid and irresistible course, when swoln and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions.

The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
The rocks, and nodding groves, rebellow to the roar.

I. 2.

* Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares,
And frantic Passions, hear thy soft control.
On Thracia's Hills the Lord of War
Has curb'd the fury of his car,
And dropp'd his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the sceptred hand
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing:
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

I. 3.

† Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
Temper'd to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's velvet-green
The rosy-crowned Loves are seen
On Cytherea's day
With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
Frisking light in frolic measures;
Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet:
To brisk notes in cadence beating
Glance their many-twinkling feet.

---

* Power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian of Pindar.

† Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body.

Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare:
Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay.
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way:
O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom, move
The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love.

II. 1.

* Man's feeble race what ills await!
Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate!
The fond complaint, my Song, disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he giv'n in vain the heav'nly Muse?
Night, and all her sickly dews,
Her Spectres wan, and Birds of boding cry,
He gives to range the dreary sky:
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war.

II. 2.

† In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight-gloom
To cheer the shivering Native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the od'rous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,

---

* To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given to mankind by the same Providence that sends the day by its cheerful presence to dispel the gloom and terrors of the night.

† Extensive influence of poetic genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations: its connexion with liberty, and the virtues that naturally attend on it.—(See the Erse, Norwegian, and Welch Fragments; the Lapland and American Songs.)

She deigns to hear the savage Youth repeat
In loose numbers wildly sweet
Their feather-cinctured Chiefs, and dusky Loves.
Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
Th' unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

II. 3.

* Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering Lab'rinths creep,
How do your tuneful Echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of Anguish!
Where each old poetic Mountain
Inspiration breathed around;
Ev'ry shade and hallow'd Fountain
Murmur'd deep a solemn sound:
Till the sad Nine in Greece's evil hour
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

III. 1.

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's † Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,

---

* Progress of poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt had travelled in Italy, and formed their taste there; Spenser imitated the Italian writers; Milton improved on them: but this school expired soon after the Restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since.

† Shakspeare.

To him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face: the dauntless Child
Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smiled.
'This pencil take,' she said, 'whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy;
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears.'

III. 2.

Nor second He*, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of th' Abyss to spy.
He pass'd the flaming bounds of Place and Time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble, while they gaze,
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two Coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

III. 3.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts, that breathe, and words, that burn.
† But ah! 'tis heard no more——

---

* Milton.

† We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind, than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's day: for Cowley (who had his merit) yet wanted judgment, style, and harmony for such a task. That of Pope is not worthy of so great a man. Mr. Mason, indeed, of late days, has touched

Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
  * That the Theban eagle bear,
Sailing with supreme dominion
  Through the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
  Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the Sun:
  Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

---

the true chords, and with a masterly hand in some of his Choruses,—above all in the last of Caractacus;

'Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread?' &c.

* Pindar.

ODE VI.

THE BARD.

Pindaric *.

I. 1.

'RUIN seize thee, ruthless King!
Confusion on thy banners wait!
Though fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.
Helm, nor Hauberk's† twisted mail,
Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!'
Such were the sounds, that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's‡ shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array.

---

* This Ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the Bards that fell into his hands to be put to death.

† The Hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail, that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion.

‡ *Snowdon* was a name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract which the Welch themselves call *Craigian-eryri:* it included all the highlands of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire,

Stout Glo'ster * stood aghast in speechless trance:
'To arms!' cried Mortimer †, and couch'd his quiv'ring lance.

I. 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
And with a Master's hand, and Prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
'Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3.

'Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hush'd the stormy main:
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topp'd head.

---

as far east as the river Conway. R. Hygden, speaking of the castle of Conway, built by King Edward the First, says, 'Ad ortum amnis Conway ad clivum montis Erery;' and Matthew of Westminster, (ad ann. 1283,) 'Apud Aberconway ad pedes montis Snowdoniæ fecit erigi castrum forte.'

* Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward.

† Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore.

They both were *Lords-Marchers*, whose lands lay on the borders of Wales, and probably accompanied the King in this expedition.

On dreary Arvon's shore * they lie,
Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale:
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
The famish'd Eagle † screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries——
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
I see them sit; they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land:
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And ‡ weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.'

II. 1.

" Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race.
Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
§ When Severn shall re-echo with affright

---

* The shores of Caernarvonshire opposite to the Isle of Anglesey.

† Camden and others observe, that eagles used annually to build their aerie among the rocks of Snowdon, which from thence (as some think) were named by the Welch *Craigian-eryri*, or the crags of the eagles. At this day (I am told) the highest point of Snowdon is called *the eagle's nest*. That bird is certainly no stranger to this island, as the Scots, and the people of Cumberland, Westmoreland, &c. can testify: it even has built its nest in the Peak of Derbyshire. (See Willoughby's Ornithol. published by Ray.)

‡ See the Norwegian Ode, that follows.

§ Edward the Second, cruelly butchered in Berkley Castle.

The shrieks of death, through Berkley's roof that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing King!
* She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled Mate,
† From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heav'n! What Terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

II. 2.

" Mighty Victor, mighty Lord,
‡ Low on his funeral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the sable § Warrior fled?
Thy son is gone. He rests among the Dead.
The Swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
Gone to salute the rising Morn.
Fair ‖ laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the Azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded Vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening-prey.

---

* Isabel of France, Edward the Second's adulterous queen.

† Triumphs of Edward the Third in France.

‡ Death of that King, abandoned by his children, and even robbed in his last moments by his courtiers and his mistress.

§ Edward, the Black Prince, dead sometime before his father.

‖ Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign. See Froissard, and other contemporary writers.

II. 3.

" * Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare;
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:
Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled Guest.
Heard ye the din of † battle bray,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
Long years of havock urge their destined course,
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.
Ye Towers of Julius, ‡ London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
Revere his § Consort's faith, his Father's ‖ fame,
And spare the meek ¶ Usurper's holy head!
Above, below, the ** rose of snow,
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:

---

* Richard the Second (as we are told by Archbishop Scroop and the confederate lords in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham, and all the older writers) was starved to death. The story of his assassination by Sir Piers, of Exon, is of much later date.

† Ruinous civil wars of York and Lancaster.

‡ Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, &c. believed to be murdered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar.

§ Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her husband and her crown.

‖ Henry the Fifth.

¶ Henry the Sixth, very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the crown.

** The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster.

The bristled * Boar in infant-gore
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, Brothers, bending o'er th' accursed loom,
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1.

" Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
† Half of thy heart we consecrate.
(The web is wove. The work is done.")
' Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unbless'd, unpitied, here to mourn:
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But oh! what solemn scenes, on Snowdon's height
Descending slow, their glittering skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
Ye unborn Ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost ‡ Arthur we bewail.
All-hail, § ye genuine Kings! Britannia's Issue, hail!

---

* The silver Boar was the badge of Richard the Third; whence he was usually known, in his own time, by the name of *the Boar*.

† Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her lord is well known. The monuments of his regret, and sorrow for the loss of her, are still to be seen at Northampton, Geddington, Waltham, and other places.

‡ It was the common belief of the Welch nation, that King Arthur was still alive in Fairy-Land, and should return again to reign over Britain.

§ Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied, that the Welch should regain their sovereignty over this island; which seemed to be accomplished in the House of Tudor.

III. 2.

'Girt with many a Baron bold,
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
And gorgeous Dames, and Statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a Form divine!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-Line;
Her lion-port *, her awe-commanding face,
Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strains of vocal transport round her play!
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin †, hear!
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
Waves in the eye of Heav'n her many-colour'd wings.

III. 3.

'The verse adorn again
Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
In ‡ buskin'd measures move
Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, Tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A § voice as of the Cherub-Choir,
Gales from blooming Eden bear;
‖ And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire.

---

* Speed, relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, Ambassador of Poland, says, 'And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert orator no less with her stately port and majestical deporture, than with the tartnesse of her princelie checkes.'

† Taliessin, chief of the bards, flourished in the sixth century. His works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration among his countrymen.

‡ Shakspeare. § Milton.

‖ The succession of poets after Milton's time.

Fond impious Man, think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
Raised by thy breath, has quench'd the Orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me: With joy I see
The different doom our Fates assign.
Be thine Despair, and sceptred Care;
To triumph, and to die, are mine.'
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

ODE VII.

FOR MUSIC*.

Irregular.

I.

HENCE, avaunt, ('tis holy ground)
Comus, and his midnight-crew,
And Ignorance with looks profound,
And dreaming Sloth of pallid hue,
Mad Sedition's cry profane,
Servitude that hugs her chain,
Nor in these consecrated bowers
Let painted Flatt'ry hide her serpent-train in Flowers.
Nor Envy base, nor creeping Gain
Dare the Muse's walk to stain,
While bright-eyed Science watches round:
Hence, away, 'tis holy ground!'

II.

From yonder realms of empyrean day
Bursts on my ear th' indignant lay:
There sit the sainted Sage, the Bard divine,
The Few, whom Genius gave to shine

* This Ode was performed in the Senate-House at Cambridge, July 1, 1769, at the Installation of his Grace Augustus Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, Chancellor of the University.

Through every unborn age, and undiscover'd clime.
Rapt in celestial transport they,
Yet hither oft a glance from high
They send of tender sympathy
To bless the place, where on their opening soul
First the genuine ardor stole.
'Twas Milton struck the deep-toned shell,
And, as the choral warblings round him swell,
Meek Newton's self bends from his state sublime,
And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.

III.

'Ye brown o'er-arching Groves,
That Contemplation loves,
Where willowy Camus lingers with delight!
Oft at the blush of dawn
I trod your level lawn,
Oft woo'd the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,
With Freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy.'

IV.

But hark! the portals sound, and pacing forth
With solemn steps and slow,
High Potentates, and Dames of royal birth,
And mitred Fathers in long order go:
Great * Edward, with the lilies on his brow
From haughty Gallia torn,
And † sad Chatillon, on her bridal morn

---

* Edward the Third; who added the *fleur de lys* of France to the arms of England. He founded Trinity College.

† Mary de Valentia, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Guy de Chatillon Comte de St. Paul in France: of whom tradition says, that her husband, Audemar de Valentia, Earl of Pembroke, was slain at a tournament on the day of his nuptials. She was the foundress of Pembroke

That wept her bleeding Love, and princely * Clare,
And † Anjou's Heroine, and ‡ the paler Rose,
The rival of her crown and of her woes,
And § either Henry there,
The murder'd Saint, and the majestic Lord,
That broke the bonds of Rome.
(Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
Their human passions now no more,
Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb)
All that on Granta's fruitful plain
Rich streams of regal bounty pour'd,
And bad these awful fanes and turrets rise,
To hail their Fitzroy's festal morning come;
And thus they speak in soft accord
The liquid language of the skies.

V.

'What is Grandeur, what is Power?
Heavier toil, superior pain.
What the bright reward we gain?

College, or Hall, under the name of Aula Mariæ de Valentia.

* Elizabeth de Burg, Countess of Clare, was wife of John de Burg, son and heir of the Earl of Ulster, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by Joan of Acres, daughter of Edward the First. Hence the poet gives her the epithet of 'princely.' She founded Clare Hall.

† Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, foundress of Queen's College. The poet has celebrated her conjugal fidelity in the former Ode: V. Epode 2d, line 13th.

‡ Elizabeth Widville, wife of Edward the Fourth, (hence called the paler Rose, as being of the House of York.) She added to the foundation of Margaret of Anjou.

§ Henry the Sixth and Eighth. The former the founder of King's, the latter the greatest benefactor to Trinity College.

The grateful memory of the Good.
Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
The bee's collected treasures sweet,
Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet
The still small voice of Gratitude.'

VI.

Foremost and leaning from her golden cloud
The * venerable Marg'ret see!
'Welcome, my noble Son, (she cries aloud)
To this, thy kindred train, and me:
Pleased in thy lineaments we trace
† A Tudor's fire, a Beaufort's grace.
Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,
The flower unheeded shall descry,
And bid it round heav'n's altars shed
The fragrance of its blushing head:
Shall raise from earth the latent gem
To glitter on the diadem.

VII.

'Lo, Granta waits to lead her blooming band,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, She
No vulgar praise, no venal incense flings;
Nor dares with courtly tongue refined
Profane thy inborn royalty of mind:
She reveres herself and thee.
With modest pride to grace thy youthful brow
The laureate wreath, ‡ that Cecil wore, she brings,
And to thy just, thy gentle hand

---

* Countess of Richmond and Derby; the mother of Henry the Seventh, foundress of St. John's and Christ's Colleges.

† The Countess was a Beaufort, and married to a Tudor: hence the application of this line to the Duke of Grafton, who claims descent from both these families.

‡ Lord Treasurer Burleigh was Chancellor of the University, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Submits the Fasces of her sway,
While Spirits blest above and Men below
Join with glad voice the loud symphonious lay.

VIII.

'Through the wild waves as they roar
With watchful eye and dauntless mien
Thy steady course of honour keep,
Nor fear the rocks, nor seek the shore:
The Star of Brunswick smiles serene,
And gilds the horrors of the deep.'

ODE VIII.

THE FATAL SISTERS.

From the Norse-Tongue.*

NOW the Storm begins to lower,
(Haste, the loom of Hell prepare,)
Iron-sleet of arrowy shower
Hurtles in the darken'd air.

---

* To be found in the Orcades of Thormodus Torfæus; Hafniæ, 1697, folio: and also in Bartholinus.

Vitt er orpit fyrir valfalli, &c.

The design of Mr. Gray in writing this and the three following imitative Odes is given in the Memoirs of his Life. For the better understanding the first of these, the reader is to be informed, that in the eleventh century, *Sigurd*, Earl of the Orkney-Islands, went with a fleet of ships, and a considerable body of troops into Ireland, to the assistance of *Sictryg with the silken beard*, who was then making war on his father-in-law *Brian*, King of Dublin: the Earl and all his forces were cut to pieces, and *Sictryg* was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of *Brian*, their King, who fell in the action. On Christmas-day, (the day of the battle,) a native of *Caithness*, in Scotland, saw at a distance a

Glitt'ring lances are the loom,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a Soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane.

See the griesly texture grow,
('Tis of human entrails made,)
And the weights, that play below,
Each a gasping Warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword, that once a Monarch bore,
Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista black, terrific Maid,
Sangrida, and Hilda see,
Join the wayward work to aid:
'Tis the woof of victory.

---

number of persons on horseback riding full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till looking through an opening in the rocks he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women: they were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sung the following dreadful Song; which, when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped six to the North and as many to the South. These were the *Valkyriur*, female Divinities, servants of *Odin* (or *Woden*) in the Gothic Mythology. Their name signifies *Choosers of the slain*. They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands; and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to *Valkalla*, the hall of *Odin*, or paradise of the Brave; where they attended the banquet, and served the departed Heroes with horns of mead and ale.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war)
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our Friends the conflict share,
Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of fate we tread,
Wading through th' ensanguined field:
Gondula, and Geira, spread
O'er the youthful King your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
Ours to kill, and ours to spare:
Spite of danger he shall live.
(Weave the crimson web of war.)

They, whom once the desert-beach
Pent within its bleak domain,
Soon their ample sway shall stretch
O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless Earl is laid,
Gored with many a gaping wound:
Fate demands a nobler head;
Soon a King shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin weep,
Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow steep,
Strains of Immortality!

Horror covers all the heath,
Clouds of carnage blot the sun.
Sisters, weave the web of death;
Sisters, cease; the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
Songs of joy and triumph sing!
Joy to the victorious bands;
Triumph to the younger King.

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,
Learn the tenor of our song.
Scotland, through each winding vale
Far and wide the notes prolong.

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed:
Each her thundering falchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed.
Hurry, hurry to the field.

ODE IX.

THE DESCENT OF ODIN*.

From the Norse-Tongue.

UPROSE the King of Men with speed,
And saddled strait his coal-black steed;
Down the yawning steep he rode,
That leads to †Hela's drear abode.
Him the Dog of Darkness spied,
His shaggy throat he open'd wide,
While from his jaws, with carnage fill'd,
Foam and human gore distill'd:
Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin;
And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
The Father of the powerful spell.
Onward still his way he takes,
(The groaning earth beneath him shakes,)
Till full before his fearless eyes
The portals nine of hell arise.

---

* The original is to be found in Bartholinus, de causis contemnendæ mortis; Hafniæ, 1689, quarto.

Upreis Odinn allda gautr, &c.

† *Niflheimr*, the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds, to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, old age, or by any other means than in battle: over it presided Hela, the Goddess of Death.

Right against the eastern gate,
By the moss-grown pile he sate;
Where long of yore to sleep was laid
The dust of the prophetic Maid.
Facing to the northern clime,
Thrice he traced the Runic rhyme;
Thrice pronounced, in accents dread,
The thrilling verse that wakes the Dead;
Till from out the hollow ground
Slowly breathed a sullen sound.

Pr. What call unknown, what charms presume
To break the quiet of the tomb?
Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,
And drags me from the realms of night?
Long on these mould'ring bones have beat
The winter's snow, the summer's heat,
The drenching dews and driving rain!
Let me, let me sleep again.
Who is he, with voice unblest,
That calls me from the bed of rest?

O. A Traveller, to thee unknown,
Is he that calls, a Warrior's Son.
Thou the deeds of light shalt know;
Tell me what is done below,
For whom yon glitt'ring board is spread,
Drest for whom yon golden bed.

Pr. Mantling in the goblet see
The pure bev'rage of the bee;
O'er it hangs the shield of gold;
'Tis the drink of Balder bold:
Balder's head to death is giv'n.
Pain can reach the Sons of Heav'n!
Unwilling I my lips unclose:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

O. Once again my call obey.
Prophetess, arise, and say,

What dangers Odin's Child await,
Who the Author of his fate.

Pr. In Hoder's hand the Hero's doom:
His brother sends him to the tomb.
Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

O. Prophetess, my spell obey,
Once again arise, and say,
Who th' Avenger of his guilt,
By whom shall Hoder's blood be spilt.

Pr. In the caverns of the west,
By Odin's fierce embrace comprest,
A wond'rous Boy shall Rinda bear,
Who ne'er shall comb his raven-hair,
Nor wash his visage in the stream,
Nor see the sun's departing beam;
Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile
Flaming on the fun'ral pile.
Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

O. Yet awhile my call obey.
Prophetess, awake, and say,
What Virgins these, in speechless woe,
That bend to earth their solemn brow,
That their flaxen tresses tear,
And snowy veils, that float in air.
Tell me whence their sorrows rose:
Then I leave thee to repose.

Pr. Ha! no Traveller art thou,
King of Men, I know thee now,
Mightiest of a mighty line——

O. No boding Maid of skill divine
Art thou, nor Prophetess of good;
But mother of the giant-brood!

Pr. Hie thee hence, and boast at home,
That never shall Inquirer come
To break my iron-sleep again;
Till * Lok has burst his tenfold chain.
Never, till substantial Night
Has reassumed her ancient right;
Till wrapp'd in flames, in ruin hurl'd,
Sinks the fabric of the world.

---

* *Lok* is the evil Being, who continues in chains till the *Twilight of the Gods* approaches, when he shall break his bonds; the human race, the stars, and sun, shall disappear; the earth sink in the seas, and fire consume the skies: even Odin himself and his kindred-deities shall perish. For a farther explanation of this mythology, see 'Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc, par Mons. Mallet,' 1755, quarto; or rather a translation of it, published in 1770, and entitled, 'Northern Antiquities,' in which some mistakes in the original are judiciously corrected.

ODE X.

THE TRIUMPHS OF OWEN *.

From the Welch.

OWEN's praise demands my song,
Owen swift, and Owen strong;
Fairest flower of Roderic's stem,
† Gwyneth's shield, and Britain's gem.
He nor heaps his brooded stores,
Nor on all profusely pours;
Lord of every regal art,
Liberal hand, and open heart.

Big with hosts of mighty name,
Squadrons three against him came;
This the force of Eirin hiding,
Side by side as proudly riding,
On her shadow long and gay
‡ Lochlin ploughs the wat'ry way;
There the Norman sails afar
Catch the winds, and join the war:
Black and huge along they sweep,
Burthens of the angry deep.

---

* From Mr. Evans's Specimens of the Welch Poetry; London, 1764, quarto. Owen succeeded his father Griffin in the principality of North Wales, A. D. 1120. This battle was fought near forty years afterwards.

† North Wales. ‡ Denmark.

Dauntless on his native sands
* The Dragon-Son of Mona stands;
In glitt'ring arms and glory drest,
High he rears his ruby crest.
There the thund'ring strokes begin,
There the press, and there the din;
Talymalfra's rocky shore
Echoing to the battle's roar.
† Check'd by the torrent-tide of blood
Backward Meinai rolls his flood;
While, heap'd his master's feet around,
Prostrate Warriors gnaw the ground.
Where his glowing eye-balls turn,
Thousand Banners round him burn.
Where he points his purple spear,
Hasty, hasty Rout is there,
Marking with indignant eye
Fear to stop, and shame to fly.
There Confusion, Terror's child,
Conflict fierce, and Ruin wild,
Agony, that pants for breath,
Despair and honourable Death.

---

* The red Dragon is the device of Cadwallader, which all his descendants bore on their banners.

† This and the three following lines are not in the former Editions, but are now added from the author's MS.

ODE XI.

THE DEATH OF HOEL.

From the Welch *.

HAD I but the torrent's might,
With headlong rage and wild affright
Upon Deïra's squadrons hurl'd,
To rush, and sweep them from the world!

Too, too secure in youthful pride
By them my friend, my Hoel, died,
Great Cian's Son: of Madoc old
He ask'd no heaps of hoarded gold;
Alone in Nature's wealth array'd,
He ask'd, and had the lovely Maid.

To Cattraeth's vale in glitt'ring row
Twice two hundred Warriors go;
Every Warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honour deck,
Wreath'd in many a golden link:
From the golden cup they drink
Nectar, that the bees produce,
Or the grape's ecstatic juice.

---

* Of Aneurim, styled the Monarch of the Bards. He flourished about the time of Taliessin, A. D. 570. This Ode is extracted from the Gododin, (See Mr. Evans's Specimens, p. 71 and 73) and now first published.

Flush'd with mirth and hope they burn:
But none from Cattraeth's vale return,
Save Aëron brave, and Conan strong,
(Bursting through the bloody throng)
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep, and sing their fall.

SONNET *

ON THE

DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST.

IN vain to me the smiling Mornings shine,
And redd'ning Phœbus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require:
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet Morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men:
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:
To warm their little loves the birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him, that cannot hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

---

* Now first published. See Memoirs, Sect. 3.

EPITAPH I.

ON * MRS. CLARKE.

LO! where this silent Marble weeps,
A Friend, a Wife, a Mother sleeps;
A Heart, within whose sacred cell
The peaceful Virtues loved to dwell.
Affection warm, and faith sincere,
And soft humanity were there.
In agony, in death resign'd,
She felt the Wound she left behind.
Her infant Image, here below,
Sits smiling on a Father's woe:
Whom what awaits, while yet he strays
Along the lonely vale of days?
A Pang, to secret sorrow dear;
A Sigh; an unavailing Tear;
Till Time shall ev'ry grief remove,
With Life, with Memory, and with Love.

---

* This lady, the wife of Dr. Clarke, physician at Epsom, died April 27, 1757; and is buried in the church of Beckenham, Kent.

EPITAPH II.*

ON SIR WILLIAM WILLIAMS.

HERE, foremost in the dangerous paths of fame,
Young Williams fought for England's fair renown;
His mind each muse, each grace adorn'd his frame,
Nor Envy dared to view him with a frown.

At Aix his voluntary sword he drew,
There first in blood his infant honour seal'd;
From fortune, pleasure, science, love he flew,
And scorn'd repose when Britain took the field.

With eyes of flame, and cool undaunted breast,
Victor he stood on Bellisle's rocky steeps——
Ah! gallant youth! this marble tells the rest,
Where melancholy Friendship bends, and weeps.

---

* This Epitaph (hitherto unpublished) was written at the request of Mr. Frederick Montagu, who intended to have inscribed it on a Monument at Bellisle, at the siege of which this accomplished youth was killed, 1761; but from some difficulty attending the erection of it, this design was not executed.

E L E G Y

WRITTEN IN

A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

THE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to These the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred Spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed Swain may say,
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

'Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

'One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

'The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him
born.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

THE EPITAPH.

HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

ADDITIONAL POEMS,

NOT IN MR. MASON'S EDITION.

VERSES

ON

THE MARRIAGE OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

IGNARÆ nostrûm mentes, et inertia corda,
Dum curas regum, et sortem miseramur iniquam,
Quæ solio affixit, vetuitque calescere flammâ
Dulci, quæ dono divum, gratissima serpit
Viscera per, mollesque animis lene implicat æstus;
Nec teneros sensus, Veneris nec præmia nôrunt,
Eloquiumve oculi, aut facunda silentia linguæ:

Scilicit ignorant lacrymas, sævosque dolores,
Dura rudimenta, et violentiæ exordia flammæ;
Scilicit ignorant, quæ flumine tinxit amaro
Tela Venus, cæcique armamentaria Divi,
Irasque, insidiasque, et tacitum sub pectore vulnus;
Namque sub ingressu, primoque in limine Amoris
Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curæ;
Intus habent dulces Risus, et Gratiæ sedem,
Et roseis resupina toris, roseo ore Voluptas:
Regibus huc faciles aditus; communia spernunt
Ostia, jamque expers duris custodibus istis
Panditur accessus, penetraliaque intima Templi.

Tuque Oh! Angliacis, Princeps, spes optima regnis,
Ne tantum, ne finge metum; quid imagine captus
Hæres, et mentem pictura pascis inani?
Umbram miraris: nec longum tempus, et ipsa
Ibit in amplexus, thalamosque ornabit ovantes.
Ille tamen tabulis inhians longum haurit amorem,
Affatu fruitur tacito, auscultatque tacentem
Immemor artificis calami, risumque, ruboremque
Aspicit in fucis, pictæque in virginis ore:
Tanta Venus potuit; tantus tenet error amantes.

Nascere, magna Dies, qua sese Augusta Britanno
Committat Pelago, patriamque relinquat amœnam;
Cujus in adventum jam nunc tria regna secundos
Attolli in plausus, dulcique accensa furore
Incipiunt agitare modos, et carmina dicunt:
Ipse animo sedenim juvenis comitatur euntem
Explorat ventos, atque auribus aëra captat,
Atque auras, atque astra vocat crudelia; pectus
Intentum exultat, surgitque arrecta cupido;
Incusat spes ægra fretum, solitoque videtur
Latior effundi pontus, fructusque morantes.

Nascere, Lux major, qua sese Augusta Britanno
Committat juveni totam, propriamque dicabit;
At citius (precor) Oh! cedas melioribus astris:
Nox finem pompæ, finemque imponere curis
Possit, et in thalamos furtim deducere nuptam;
Sufficiat requiemque viris, et amantibus umbras;
Adsit Hymen, et subridens cum matre Cupido
Accedant, sternantque toros, ignemque ministrent;
Ilicet haud pictæ incandescit imaginæ formæ
Ulterius juvenis, verumque agnoscit amorem.

Sculptile sicut ebur, faciemque arsisse venustam
Pygmaliona canunt; ante hanc suspiria ducit,
Alloquiturque amens, flammamque et vulnera narrat;
Implorata Venus jussit cum vivere signum,

Fœminæam inspirans animam; quæ gaudia surgunt,
Audiit ut primæ nascentia murmura linguæ,
Luctari in vitam, et paulatim volvere ocellos
Sedulus, aspexitque novâ splendescere flammâ;
Corripit amplexu vivam, jamque oscula jungit
Acria confestim, recipitque rapitque; prioris
Immemor ardoris, Nymphæque oblitus eburnæ.

THO. GRAY, Pet. Coll.

SONG.*

THYRSIS, when he left me, swore
  In the Spring he would return—
Ah! what means the op'ning flower?
  And the bud that decks the thorn?
'Twas the nightingale that sung!
'Twas the lark that upward sprung!

Idle notes! untimely green!
  Why such unavailing haste?
Gentle gales and sky serene
  Prove not always Winter past.
Cease, my doubts, my fears to move—
Spare the honour of my love.

---

* This was written, at the request of Miss Speed, to an old Air of Geminiani: the thought from the French.

THE INQUIRY.*

WITH Beauty, with Pleasure surrounded, to languish—
To weep without knowing the cause of my anguish;
To start from short slumbers, and wish for the morning—
To close my dull eyes when I see it returning;
Sighs sudden and frequent, looks ever dejected—
Words that steal from my tongue, by no meaning connected!
Ah, say, fellow-swains, how these symptoms befel me?
They smile, but reply not—Sure Delia can tell me!

---

* These amatory lines having been found among the MSS. of Gray, but bearing no title, we have ventured, for the sake of uniformity in this volume, to prefix the above. The lines themselves will be found in a note in the second volume of Warton's Edition of Pope's Works.

TOPHET:

AN EPIGRAM.

[Mr. Etough*, of Cambridge University, was a person as remarkable for the eccentricities of his character, as for his personal appearance. A Mr. Tyson, of Bene't College, made an etching of his head, and presented it to Mr. Gray, who wrote under it the following lines.]

THUS Tophet look'd; so grinn'd the brawling fiend,
Whilst frighted prelates bow'd, and call'd him friend.
Our mother-church, with half-averted sight,
Blush'd as she bless'd her grisly proselyte;
Hosannas rung through Hell's tremendous borders,
And Satan's self had thoughts of taking orders.

---

* Some information respecting this gentleman (who was Rector of Therfield, Herts, and of Colmworth, Bedfordshire) will be found in the Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. LVI. p. 25. 281.

IMPROMPTU,

Suggested by a View, in 1766, *of the Seat and Ruins of a deceased Nobleman, at Kingsgate, Kent.*

OLD, and abandon'd by each venal friend,
Here H——d form'd the pious resolution
To smuggle a few years, and strive to mend
A broken character and constitution.

On this congenial spot he fix'd his choice;
Earl Goodwin trembled for his neighb'ring sand;
Here sea-gulls scream, and cormorants rejoice,
And mariners, though shipwreck'd, dread to land.

Here reign the blust'ring North and blighting East,
No tree is heard to whisper, bird to sing;
Yet Nature could not furnish out the feast,
Art he invokes new horrors still to bring.

Here mould'ring fanes and battlements arise,
Turrets and arches nodding to their fall;
Unpeopled monast'ries delude our eyes,
And mimic desolation covers all.

'Ah!' said the sighing peer, 'had B—te been true,
Nor M—'s, R—'s, B—'s friendship vain,
Far better scenes than these had blest our view,
And realized the beauties which we feign.

'Purged by the sword, and purified by fire,
Then had we seen proud London's hated walls;
Owls would have hooted in St. Peter's choir,
And foxes stunk and litter'd in St. Paul's.'

THE CANDIDATE;

OR,

THE CAMBRIDGE COURTSHIP.*

WHEN sly Jemmy Twitcher had smugg'd up his face,
With a lick of court white-wash, and pious grimace,
A wooing he went, where three sisters of old
In harmless society guttle and scold.

Lord! sister, says Physic to Law, I declare,
Such a sheep-biting look, such a pick-pocket air!
Not I for the Indies!—You know I'm no prude,—
But his name is a shame,—and his eyes are so lewd!
Then he shambles and straddles so oddly—I fear—
No—at our time of life 'twould be silly, my dear.

I don't know, says Law, but methinks for his look
'Tis just like the picture in Rochester's book;
Then his character, Phyzzy,—his morals—his life—
When she died, I can't tell, but he once had a wife.
They say he's no Christian, loves drinking and w——g,
And all the town rings of his swearing and roaring!

---

* This *jeu d'esprit* was written a short time previous to the election of a High Steward of the University of Cambridge, for which office the noble lord alluded to made an active canvass.

His lying and filching, and Newgate-bird tricks;—
Not I—for a coronet, chariot and six.

Divinity heard, between waking and dozing,
Her sisters denying, and Jemmy proposing:
From table she rose, and with bumper in hand,
She stroked up her belly, and stroked down her band—
What a pother is here about wenching and roaring!
Why, David loved catches, and Solomon w——g:
Did not Israel filch from th' Egyptians of old
Their jewels of silver and jewels of gold?
The prophet of Bethel, we read, told a lie;
He drinks—so did Noah;—he swears—so do I;
To reject him for such peccadillos, were odd;
Besides, he repents—for he talks about G**—
[*To* Jemmy]
Never hang down your head, you poor penitent elf;
Come buss me—I'll be Mrs. Twitcher myself.

* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *

SKETCH

OF

HIS OWN CHARACTER.*

TOO poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune;
He had not the method of making a fortune:
Could love and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd;
No very great Wit, he believed in a God.
A Post or a Pension he did not desire,
But left Church and State to Charles Townshend and Squire †.

---

* This was written in 1761, and was found in one of his pocket-books.

† At that time Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and afterwards Bishop of St. David's.

POEMS,

ADDRESSED TO, AND IN MEMORY OF,

MR. GRAY.

TO MR. GRAY, UPON HIS ODES.

*By David Garrick, Esq.**

REPINE not, Gray, that our weak dazzled eyes
  Thy daring heights and brightness shun;
How few can trace the eagle to the skies,
  Or, like him, gaze upon the sun!

Each gentle reader loves the gentle Muse,
  That little dares and little means;
Who humbly sips her learning from Reviews,
  Or flutters in the Magazines.

No longer now from Learning's sacred store
  Our minds their health and vigour draw;
Homer and Pindar are revered no more,
  No more the Stagyrite is law.

Though nursed by these, in vain thy Muse appears
  To breathe her ardours in our souls;
In vain to sightless eyes and deaden'd ears
  The lightning gleams, the thunder rolls:

Yet droop not, Gray, nor quit thy heaven-born art;
  Again thy wond'rous powers reveal;
Wake slumb'ring Virtue in the Briton's heart,
  And rouse us to reflect and feel!

With ancient deeds our long-chill'd bosoms fire,
  Those deeds that mark Eliza's reign!
Make Britons Greeks again, then strike the lyre,
  And Pindar shall not sing in vain.

---

* From the original MS. in the possession of the late Isaac Reed, Esq.

ODE TO MR. GRAY,

ON

THE BACKWARDNESS OF SPRING.

By the late Mr. Richard West.

DEAR Gray, that always in my heart
Possessest far the better part,
What mean these sudden blasts that rise
And drive the Zephyrs from the skies?
O join with mine thy tuneful lay,
And invocate the tardy May.

Come, fairest Nymph, resume thy reign!
Bring all the Graces in thy train!
With balmy breath and flowery tread,
Rise from thy soft ambrosial bed;
Where, in elysian slumber bound,
Embow'ring myrtles veil thee round.

Awake, in all thy glories drest,
Recal the Zephyrs from the west;
Restore the sun, revive the skies,
At mine, and Nature's call, arise!
Great Nature's self upbraids thy stay,
And misses her accustom'd May.

See! all her works demand thy aid;
The labours of Pomona fade:
A plaint is heard from ev'ry tree;
Each budding flow'ret calls for thee;

The birds forget to love and sing;
With storms alone the forests ring.

Come then, with Pleasure at thy side,
Diffuse thy vernal spirit wide;
Create, where'er thou turn'st thine eye,
Peace, Plenty, Love, and Harmony;
Till ev'ry being share its part,
And Heav'n and Earth be glad at heart.

ODE

ON

THE DEATH OF MR. GRAY.

Me quoque Musarum studium sub nocte silenti
Artibus assuetis solicitare solet.

Claudian.

ENOUGH of fabling, and th' unhallow'd haunts
Of Dian' and of Delia, names profane,
Since not Diana nor all Delia's train
Are subjects that befit a serious song;
For who the bards among
May but compare with thee, lamented Gray!
Whose pensive solemn lay
Drew all the list'ning shepherds in a ring,
Well pleased to hear thee sing
Thy moving notes, on sunny hill or plain,
And catch new grace from thy immortal strain.

O wood-hung Menaï, and ye sacred groves
Of Delphi, we still venerate your names,
Whose awful shades inspired the Druids' dreams.
Your recess, though imagined, Fancy loves,
And through these long-lost scenes delighted roves:
So future bards perhaps shall sing of Thames,

And as they sing shall say,
'Twas there of old where mused illustrious Gray!
By Isis' banks his tuneful lays would suit
To Pindar's lofty lyre, or Sappho's Lesbian lute.

Oft would he sing, when the still Eve came on,
Till sable Night resumed her ebon throne,
And taught us, in his melancholic mood,
To scorn the great, and love the wise and good;
Told us, 'twas virtue never dies,
And to what ills frail mankind open lies;
How safe through life's tempestuous sea to steer,
Where dang'rous rocks and shelves and whirlpools
oft appear.

And when fair Morn arose again to view,
A fairer landscape still he drew,
That blooms like Eden in his charming lays,
The hills and dales, and Heav'n's cerulean blue,
Brighten'd o'er all by Sol's resplendent rays.
The musky gale, in rosy vale,
And gilded clouds on azure hills,
The fragrant bow'rs, and painted flow'rs,
And tinklings of the silver rills;
The very insects, that in sunbeams play,
Turn useful monitors in his grave moral lay.

But, ah! sad Melancholy intervenes,
And draws a cloud o'er all these shining scenes.
'Tis her, alas! we often find
The troubler of each great unbounded mind,
And leagued with her associate Fear,
Will tremble lest the turning sphere,
And sinking earth, and reeling planets run
In dire disorder with the falling sun.

But now, great Bard, thy life of pain is o'er;
'Tis we must weep, though thou shalt grieve no
more.

Through other scenes thou now dost rove,
And clothed with gladness walk'st the courts above,
And listen'st to the heav'nly choir,
Hymning their God, while seraphs strike the lyre.
Safe with them in those radiant climes of bliss,
Thou now enjoy'st eternal happiness.

ODE

ON THE DEATH OF MR. GRAY.

By the Right Honourable the Earl of Carlisle.

WHAT spirit's that which mounts on high,
Borne on the arms of every tuneful Muse?
His white robes flutter to the gale:
They wing their way to yonder opening sky,
In glorious state through yielding clouds they sail,
And scents of heavenly flowers on earth diffuse.

What avails the poet's art?
What avails his magic hand?
Can he arrest Death's pointed dart,
Or charm to sleep his murderous band?

Well I know thee, gentle shade!
That tuneful voice, that eagle eye.—
Quick bring me flowers that ne'er shall fade,
The laurel wreath that ne'er shall die;
With every honour deck his funeral bier,
For he to every Grace and every Muse was dear!

The listening Dryad, with attention still,
On tiptoe oft would near the poet steal,
To hear him sing upon the lonely hill
Of all the wonders of th' expanded vale,

The distant hamlet, and the winding stream,
The steeple shaded by the friendly yew,
Sunk in the wood the sun's departing gleam,
The grey-robed landscape stealing from the view.

* Or wrapt in solemn thought, and pleasing woe,
O'er each low tomb he breathed his pious strain,
A lesson to the village swain,
And taught the tear of rustic grief to flow!—

† But soon with bolder note, and wilder flight,
O'er the loud strings his rapid hand would run:
Mars hath lit his torch of war,
Ranks of heroes fill the sight!
Hark! the carnage is begun!
And see the furies through the fiery air
O'er Cambria's frighten'd land the screams of horror bear!

‡ Now led by playful Fancy's hand
O'er the white surge he treads with printless feet,
To magic shores he flies, and fairy land,
Imagination's blest retreat.
Here roses paint the crimson way,
No setting sun, eternal May,
Wild as the priestess of the Thracian fane,
When Bacchus leads the madd'ning train,
His bosom glowing with celestial fire,
To harmony he struck the golden lyre;
To harmony each hill and valley rung!
The bird of Jove, as when Apollo sung,
To melting bliss resign'd his furious soul,
With milder rage his eyes began to roll,
The heaving down his thrilling joys confest,
Till by a mortal's hand subdued he sunk to rest.

---

* This alludes to Mr. Gray's Elegy written in a Country Church-yard.

† The Bard, a Pindaric Ode.

‡ The Progress of Poetry, a Pindaric Ode.

* O, guardian angel of our early day,
Henry, thy darling plant must bloom no more!
By thee attended, pensive would he stray,
Where Thames soft-murmuring laves his winding shore.
Thou bad'st him raise the moralizing song,
Through life's new seas the little bark to steer;
The winds are rude and high, the sailor young;
Thoughtless, he spies no furious tempest near,
Till to the poet's hand the helm you gave,
From hidden rocks an infant crew to save!

† Ye fiends who rankle in the human heart,
Delight in woe, and triumph in our tears,
Resume again
Your dreadful reign:
Prepare the iron scourge, prepare the venom'd dart,
Adversity no more with lenient air appears:
The snakes that twine about her head
Again their frothy poison shed;
For who can now her whirlwind flight control,
Her threatening rage beguile?
He who could still the tempest of her soul,
And force her livid lips to smile,
To happier seats is fled!
Now seated by his Thracian sire,
At the full feast of mighty Jove
To heavenly themes attunes his lyre,
And fills with harmony the realms above!

---

* Ode on a distant Prospect of Eton College.
† Hymn to Adversity.

LINES

TO

THE MEMORY OF MR. GRAY.

Extracted from the third book of
MASON'S 'ENGLISH GARDEN.'

CLOSED is that curious ear, by death's cold hand,
That mark'd each error of my careless strain
With kind severity; to whom my muse
Still loved to whisper, what she meant to sing
In louder accent; to whose taste supreme
She first and last appeal'd, nor wish'd for praise,
Save when his smile was herald to her fame.
Yes, thou art gone; yet friendship's falt'ring tongue
Invokes thee still; and still, by fancy soothed,
Fain would she hope her Gray attends the call.
Why then, alas! in this my fav'rite haunt,
Place I the urn, the bust, the sculptured lyre*,
Or fix this votive tablet, fair inscribed

---

* Mr. Gray died July 31st, 1771. This book was begun a few months after. The three following lines allude to a rustic alcove the author was then building in his garden, in which he placed a medallion of his friend, and an urn; a lyre over the entrance with the motto from Pindar, which Mr. Gray had prefixed to his Odes, ΦΩΝΑΝΤΑ ΣΥΝΕΤΟΙΣΙ, and under it, on a tablet, this stanza,

With numbers worthy thee, for they are thine?
Why, if thou hear'st me still, these symbols sad
Of fond memorial? Ah! my pensive soul!
He hears me not, nor ever more shall hear
The theme his candour, not his taste approved.

Oft, 'smiling as in scorn,' oft would he cry,
'Why waste thy numbers on a trivial art,
That ill can mimic even the humblest charms
Of all-majestic Nature?' at the word
His eye would glisten, and his accents glow
With all the Poet's frenzy, 'Sov'reign queen!
Behold, and tremble, while thou view'st her state
Throned on the heights of Skiddaw: call thy art
To build her such a throne; that art will feel
How vain her best pretensions. Trace her march
Amid the purple crags of Borrowdale;
And try like those to pile thy range of rock
In rude tumultuous chaos. See! she mounts
Her Naiad car, and, down Lodore's dread cliff
Falls many a fathom, like the headlong bard
My fabling fancy plunged in Conway's flood;
Yet not like him to sink in endless night:
For, on its boiling bosom, still she guides
Her buoyant shell, and leads the wave along;
Or spreads it broad, a river, or a lake,
As suits her pleasure; will thy boldest song
E'er brace the sinews of enervate art
To such dread daring? will it ev'n direct
Her hand to emulate those softer charms
That deck the banks of Dove, or call to birth
The bare romantic crags, and copses green,

---

taken from the first edition of his Elegy written in a Country Church-yard.

Here scatter'd oft, the loveliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
The redbreast loves to build and warble *here*,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.

That sidelong grace her circuit, whence the rills,
Bright in their crystal purity, descend
To meet their sparkling queen? around each fount
The hawthorns crowd, and knit their blossom'd sprays
To keep their sources sacred. Here, even here,
Thy art, each active sinew stretch'd in vain,
Would perish in its pride. Far rather thou
Confess her scanty power, correct, control,
Tell her how far, nor farther, she may go;
And rein with reason's curb fantastic taste.'

Yes, I will hear thee, dear lamented shade,
And hold each dictate sacred. What remains
Unsung shall so each leading rule select
As if still guided by thy judgment sage;
While, as still modell'd to thy curious ear,
Flow my melodious numbers; so shall praise,
If aught of praise the verse I weave may claim,
From just posterity reward my song.

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE

ON THE

DEATH OF MR. GRAY.

* * * * * * * *

FAIR are the gardens of the Aonian mount,
And sweet those blooming flow'rs
Which paint the Maiden's bow'rs;
And clear the waters of the gurgling fount:
Swift they wind through chequer'd allies;
Huddling down to th' open valleys;
Where the quick ripple in the sunbeams plays,
Turning to endless forms each glance of twinkling blaze.

O'er the gay scene th' enamour'd inmates roam;
And gather fresh ideas as they rise
From Nature's manifold supplies.
Alas! for whom!
Many a gleam of sprightly thought,
Many a sad and sable mood,
Whether from dazzling lustre brought,
Or nursed by shades of darksome wood,
Keep death-like silence on their native shore,
Since he, that gave them speech, is heard no more.

Flown is the spirit of Gray
Like common breath to mingle with the air:
Yet still those Goddesses peculiar care,
That breathe harmonious lay.
Retired to yonder grassy mound
In leaves of dusky hue encompass'd round,
They bid their plaintive accents fill
The covert hollows of the bosom'd hill:
With liquid voice and magic hand
Calliope informs the band:
Hush'd are the warblers of the grove, attentive to the sound.

'Soft and slow
Let the melting measures flow,
Nor lighter air disturb majestic woe.
And thou, sage Priestess * of our holy fire,
Who saw'st the Poet's flame expire,
Thy precious drops profusely shed
O'er his well-deserving head.
Thou nurtur'dst once a grateful throng,
When Milton pour'd the sweets of song
On *Lycidas sunk low* †.

'Now wake that faithful lyre——mute Dulness reigns:
Your echoes waft no more the friendly theme;
Clogg'd with thick vapours from the neighb'ring plains,
Where old Cam hardly moves his sluggard stream.
But when some public cause
Claims festive song, or more melodious tear,
Discordant murmurs grate mine ear.
Ne'er model'd by Pierian laws,

---

* Cambridge University, where Gray died.

† In 1638 the University published a volume of poems to the memory of Mr. Edward King, Milton's Lycidas.

Then idly glares full many a motley toy,
Anacreontic grief, and creeping strains of joy.

'Far other modes were thine,
Victim of hasty fate,
Whom now the powers of melody deplore;
Whether in lofty state *
Thou bad'st thy train divine
Of raptures on Pindaric pinions soar:
Or hoping from thyself to fly
To *childhood's careless* scenes †,
Thou sent'st a warm refreshing eye
On Nature's faded greens:

'Or when thy calm and steadfast mind
With philosophic reach profound
Self-pleasing vanities resign'd,
Fond of the look, *that loves the ground* ‡;
Discern'd by Reason's equal light,
How gaudy Fortune cheats the sight;
While the coarse maid, inured to pain,
Supports the lab'ring heart, and Virtue's happiest reign.

'But most the music of thy plaintive moan §
With lengthen'd note detains the list'ning ear,
As lost in thought thou wander'st all alone
Where spirits hover round their mansions drear.

'By Contemplation's eye serenely view'd,
Each lowly object wears an awful mien:
'Tis our own blindness veils the latent good:
The works of Nature need but to be seen.

---

* See Gray's Pindaric Odes.
† Ode on a distant Prospect of Eton College.
‡ Hymn to Adversity.
§ Church-yard Elegy.

'Thou saw'st her beaming from the hamlet-sires
Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade;
Where now, still faithful to *their wonted fires* *,
Thy own dear ashes are *for ever laid.*'

---

* Gray was buried at Stoke, the scene of the Elegy.

STANZAS

ON

THE DEATH OF MR. GRAY.

By a Lady.

WHERE sleeps the Bard who graced Museus' hearse
With fragrant trophies by the Muses wove!
Shall Gray's cold urn in vain demand the verse,
Oh! can his Mason fail in plaintive love?

No; with the Nine inwrapp'd in social woe,
His lyre unstrung, sad vigil he must keep;
With them he mourns, with them his eyes o'erflow,
For such a Bard immortal Maids can weep.

Their early pupil in the heav'nly lore
Of sacred poesy and moral song,
They taught the youth on eagle wing to soar,
And bore him through aërial heights along.

Fancy, obedient to their dread command,
With brilliant Genius, marshall'd forth his way;
They lured his steps to Cambria's once-famed land,
And sleeping Druids felt his magic lay.

But vain the magic lay, the warbling lyre,
Imperious Death! from thy fell grasp to save;
He knew, and told it with a Poet's fire,
'The paths of Glory lead but to the grave.'

And shall the Bard, whose sympathizing mind
Mourn'd o'er the simple Rustic's turfy cell,
To strew his tomb no grateful Mourner find,
No Village Swain to ring one parting knell?

Yes, honour'd shade! the fringed brook I'll trace,
Green rushes culling thy dank grave to strew;
With mountain flow'rs I'll deck the hallow'd place,
And fence it round with osiers mix'd with yew.

THE TEARS OF GENIUS:

AN ODE.

By Mr. Taite.

ON Cam's fair banks, where Learning's hallow'd fane
Majestic rises on the astonish'd sight,
Where oft the Muse has led the favourite swain,
And warm'd his soul with Heaven's inspiring light,

Beneath the covert of the sylvan shade,
Where deadly cypress, mix'd with mournful yew
Far o'er the vale a gloomy stillness spread,
Celestial Genius burst upon the view.

The bloom of youth, the majesty of years,
The soften'd aspect, innocent and kind,
The sigh of sorrow, and the streaming tears,
Resistless all, their various pow'r combined.

In her fair hand a silver harp she bore,
Whose magic notes, soft-warbling from the string,
Give tranquil joy the breast ne'er knew before,
Or raise the soul on rapture's airy wing.
By grief impell'd, I heard her heave a sigh,
While thus the rapid strain resounded through the sky;

Haste, ye sister powers of song,
Hasten from the shady grove,
Where the river rolls along,
Sweetly to the voice of love.

Where, indulging mirthful pleasures,
Light you press the flow'ry green.
And from Flora's blooming treasures
Cull the wreaths for Fancy's queen.

Where your gently-flowing numbers,
Floating on the fragrant breeze,
Sink the soul in pleasing slumbers
On the downy bed of ease.

For graver strains prepare the plaintive lyre,
That wakes the softest feelings of the soul;
Let lonely Grief the melting verse inspire,
Let deep'ning Sorrow's solemn accents roll.

Rack'd by the hand of rude Disease
Behold our fav'rite Poet lies!
While every object form'd to please
Far from his couch ungrateful flies.

The blissful Muse, whose favouring smile
So lately warm'd his peaceful breast,
Diffusing heavenly joys the while,
In Transport's radiant garments drest,
With darksome grandeur and enfeebled blaze,
Sinks in the shades of night, and shuns his eager gaze.

The gaudy train, who wait on Spring *,
Tinged with the pomp of vernal pride,
The youths who mount on Pleasure's wing †,
And idly sport on Thames's side,

---

* Ode on Spring.
† Ode on the Prospect of Eton College.

With cool regard their various arts employ,
Nor rouse the drooping mind, nor give the pause
of joy.

Ha! what forms, with port sublime*,
Glide along in sullen mood,
Scorning all the threats of time,
High above Misfortune's flood?

They seize their harps, they strike the lyre,
With rapid hand, with freedom's fire.
Obedient Nature hears the lofty sound,
And Snowdon's airy cliffs the heavenly strains
resound.

In pomp of state, behold they wait,
With arms outstretch'd, and aspects kind,
To snatch on high to yonder sky,
The child of Fancy left behind:
Forgot the woes of Cambria's fatal day,
By rapture's blaze impell'd, they swell the artless
lay.

But ah! in vain they strive to sooth,
With gentle arts, the tort'ring hours;
Adversity†, with rankling tooth,
Her baleful gifts profusely pours.

Behold she comes, the fiend forlorn,
Array'd in Horror's settled gloom;
She strews the briar and prickly thorn,
And triumphs in th' infernal doom.
With frantic fury and insatiate rage,
She gnaws the throbbing breast and blasts the
glowing page.

---

* The Bard, an Ode.
† Hymn to Adversity.

No more the soft Æolian flute *
Breathes through the heart the melting strain;
The powers of Harmony are mute,
And leave the once-delightful plain;
With heavy wing, I see them beat the air,
Damp'd by the leaden hand of comfortless Despair.

Yet stay, O! stay, celestial pow'rs,
And with a hand of kind regard
Dispel the boist'rous storm that lours
Destructive on the fav'rite bard;
O watch with me his last expiring breath,
And snatch him from the arms of dark, oblivious death.

Hark, the Fatal Sisters† join,
And with Horror's mutt'ring sounds,
Weave the tissue of his line,
While the dreadful spell resounds.

'Hail, ye midnight sisters, hail,
Drive the shuttle swift along;
Let your secret charms prevail
O'er the valiant and the strong.

'O'er the glory of the land,
O'er the innocent and gay,
O'er the Muse's tuneful band—
Weave the fun'ral web of Gray.'

Tis done, 'tis done—the iron hand of pain,
With ruthless fury and corrosive force,
Racks every joint, and seizes every vein:
He sinks, he groans, he falls a lifeless corse.

Thus fades the flow'r nipp'd by the frozen gale,
Though once so sweet, so lovely to the eye:

---

* The Progress of Poesy.
† The Fatal Sisters, an Ode.

Thus the tall oaks, when boist'rous storms assail,
Torn from the earth, a mighty ruin lie.

Ye sacred sisters of the plaintive verse,
Now let the stream of fond affection flow;
O pay your tribute o'er the slow-drawn hearse,
With all the manly dignity of woe.

Oft when the Curfew tolls its parting knell
With solemn pause yon Church-yard's gloom survey,
While Sorrow's sighs and tears of Pity tell
How just the moral of the Poet's lay*.

O'er his green grave, in Contemplation's guise,
Oft let the pilgrim drop a silent tear:
Oft let the shepherd's tender accents rise,
Big with the sweets of each revolving year;
Till prostrate Time adore his deathless name,
Fix'd on the solid base of adamantine fame.

---

* Elegy in a Country Church-yard.

EPITAPH

ON

MR. GRAY'S MONUMENT,

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

By Mr. Mason.

NO more the Grecian Muse unrivall'd reigns;
To Britain let the nations homage pay!
She boasts a Homer's fire in Milton's strains,
A Pindar's rapture in the lyre of Gray.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

MR. GRAY.

MEMOIRS

OF

MR. GRAY.

SECTION I.

THE lives of men of letters seldom abound with incidents; and perhaps no life ever afforded fewer than that which I have undertaken to write. But I am far from mentioning this by way of previous apology, as is the trite custom of biographers. The respect which I owe to my deceased friend, to the public, and (let me add) to myself, prompts me to wave so impertinent a ceremonial. A reader of sense and taste never expects to find in the memoirs of a Philosopher, or Poet, the same species of entertainment, or information, which he would receive from those of a Statesman or General: he expects, however, to be either informed or entertained: nor would he be disappointed, did the writer take care to dwell principally on such topics as characterize the man, and distinguish that peculiar part which he acted in the varied Drama of Society. But this rule, self-evidently right as it may seem, is seldom observed. It was said, with almost as much truth as wit, of one of these

writers, that, when he composed the life of Lord Verulam, he forgot that he was a Philosopher; and therefore, it was to be feared, should he finish that of the Duke of Marlborough, he would forget that he was a General. I shall avoid a like fault. I will promise my reader that he shall, in the following pages, seldom behold Mr. Gray in any other light than that of a Scholar and a Poet: and though I am more solicitous to show that he was a virtuous, a friendly, and an amiable man, than either; yet this solicitude becomes unnecessary from the very papers which he has bequeathed me, and which I here arrange for the purpose: since in these the qualities of his head and heart so constantly appear together, and the fertility of his fancy so intimately unites with the sympathetic tenderness of his soul, that were it in my intention, I should find it impossible to disjoin them.

His parents were reputable citizens of London. His grandfather a considerable merchant: but his father, Mr. Philip Gray, though he also followed business, was of an indolent and reserved temper; and therefore rather diminished than increased his paternal fortune. He had many children, of whom Thomas, the subject of these memoirs, was the fifth born. All of them, except him, died in their infancy; and I have been told that he narrowly escaped suffocation (owing to too great a fulness of blood which destroyed the rest), and would certainly have been cut off as early, had not his mother, with a courage remarkable for one of her sex, and withal so very tender a parent, ventured to open a vein with her own hand, which instantly removed the paroxysm.

He was born in Cornhill, December the 26th, 1716; was educated at Eton school, under the care of Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother, who was at that time one of the assistant masters, and also a Fellow of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, to which place Mr. Gray removed, and was there admitted a

pensioner in the year 1734. While at school, he contracted a friendship with Mr. Horace Walpole and Mr. Richard West: the former of these appears, at present, with too much distinction in the literary, as well as fashionable world, to make it necessary I should enlarge upon his subject: but as the latter died before he could exert his uncommon abilities, it seems requisite to premise somewhat concerning him; especially as almost every anecdote which I have to produce, concerning the juvenile part of Mr. Gray's life, is included in his correspondence with this gentleman: a correspondence which continued, with very little interruption, for the space of about eight years, from the time of their leaving school to the death of the accomplished youth in question.

His father was Lord Chancellor of Ireland. His grandfather, by the mother, the famous Bishop Burnet. He removed from Eton to Oxford, about the same time that Mr. Gray left that place for Cambridge. Each of them carried with him the reputation of an excellent classic scholar; though I have been told that, at the time, Mr. West's genius was reckoned the more brilliant of the two: a judgment which, I conceive, was not well founded; for though Mr. West's part of that correspondence, which I shall speedily give the reader*, will un-

* I am well aware that I am here going to do a thing which the cautious and courtly Dr. Sprat (were he now alive) would highly censure. He had, it seems, a large collection of his friend Mr. Cowley's letters, 'a way of writing in which he peculiarly excelled, as in these he always expressed the native tenderness and innocent gaiety of his heart; yet the Doctor was of opinion that nothing of this nature should be published, and that the letters that pass between particular friends (if they are written as they ought to be) can scarce ever be fit to see the light.' What! not when they express

doubtedly show that he possessed very extraordinary talents, yet, on Mr. Gray's side, there seems superadded to these, such a manly precision of taste, and maturity of judgment, as would induce one to believe Mr. Walpole's phrase not very hyperbolical, who has often asserted to me that 'Gray never was a Boy.'

In April, 1738, Mr. West left Christ Church for the Inner Temple, and Mr. Gray removed from Peter-House to Town the latter end of that year; intending also to apply himself to the study of the law in the same society: for which purpose his father had already either hired or bought him a set of chambers. But on an invitation which Mr. Walpole gave him to be his companion in his travels, this intention was laid aside for the present, and never after put in execution.

According to the plan which I have formed for arranging these papers, a part of the letters which I have already mentioned will here find their

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the native tenderness and innocent gaiety of a heart like Mr. Cowley's? No, by no means, 'for in such letters the souls of men appear undressed, and in that negligent habit they may be fit to be seen by one or two in a chamber, but not to go abroad in the street.'—See Life of Cowley, page 38, Hurd's Edition.

Such readers as believe it incumbent on every well-bred soul never to appear but in full dress, will think that Dr. Sprat has reason on his side; but I suspect that the generality will, notwithstanding, wish he had been less scrupulously delicate, and lament that the letters in question are not now extant. Of one thing I am fully confident, that, had this been the case, the judicious Dr. Hurd would have found his critical labour much lessened, when, in pure charity to this amiable writer, he lately employed himself in separating

His pleasing moral from his pointed wit.

proper place. They will give a much clearer idea both of Mr. Gray and his friend, at this early period, than any narrative of mine. They will include also several specimens of their juvenile compositions, and, at the same time, mark the progress they had made in literature. They will ascertain, not only the scope and turn of their genius, but of their temper. In a word, Mr. Gray will become his own biographer, both in this and the rest of the sections into which I divide this work. By which means, and by the assistance of a few notes which I shall occasionally add, it may be hoped that nothing will be omitted which may tend to give a regular and clear delineation of his life and character.

But as this is the earliest part of their correspondence, and includes only the time which passed between Mr. Gray's admission into the university and his going abroad, it may be reasonably expected that the manner rather than the matter of these letters must constitute their principal merit; they will therefore be chiefly acceptable to such ingenuous youths, who, being about the same age, have a relish for the same studies, and bosoms susceptible of the same warmth of friendship. To these I address them; in the pleasing hope that they may prompt them to emulate their elegant simplicity, and, of course, to study with more care the classic models from which it was derived. If they do this, I shall not be much concerned if graver readers think them unimportant or even trifling.

LETTER I.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

YOU use me very cruelly: you have sent me but one letter since I have been at Oxford, and that too agreeable not to make me sensible how great my loss is in not having more. Next to seeing you is the pleasure of seeing your hand-writing; next to hearing you is the pleasure of hearing from you. Really and sincerely I wonder at you, that you thought it not worth while to answer my last letter. I hope this will have better success in behalf of your quondam school-fellow; in behalf of one who has walked hand in hand with you, like the two children in the wood,

Through many a flowery path and shelly grot,
Where learning lull'd us in her private * maze.

The very thought, you see, tips my pen with poetry, and brings Eton to my view. Consider me very seriously here in a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves Doctors and Masters of Arts; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown; consider me, I say, in this melancholy light, and then think if something be not due to

Yours.

Christ Church, Nov. 14, 1735.

P.S. I desire you will send me soon, and truly and positively, † a history of your own time.

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* This expression prettily distinguishes their studies when out of the public school, which would naturally, at their age, be vague and desultory.

† Alluding to his grandfather's history.

LETTER II.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

PERMIT me again to write to you, though I have so long neglected my duty, and forgive my brevity, when I tell you, it is occasioned wholly by the hurry I am in to get to a place where I expect to meet with no other pleasure than the sight of you; for I am preparing for London in a few days at furthest. I do not wonder in the least at your frequent blaming my indolence, it ought rather to be called ingratitude, and I am obliged to your goodness for softening so harsh an appellation. When we meet, it will, however, be my greatest of pleasures to know what you do, what you read, and how you spend your time, &c. &c. and to tell you what I do not read, and how I do not, &c. for almost all the employment of my hours may be best explained by negatives; take my word and experience upon it, doing nothing is a most amusing business; and yet neither something nor nothing gives me any pleasure. When you have seen one of my days, you have seen a whole year of my life; they go round and round like the blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying he makes a progress, and gets some ground; my eyes are open enough to see the same dull prospect, and to know that having made four-and-twenty steps more, I shall be just where I was; I may, better than most people, say my life is but a span, were I not afraid lest you should not believe that a person so short-lived could write even so long a letter as this; in short, I believe I must not send you the history of my own time, till I can

send you that also of the reformation *. However, as the most undeserving people in the world must sure have the vanity to wish somebody had a regard for them, so I need not wonder at my own, in being pleased that you care about me. You need not doubt, therefore, of having a first row in the front box of my little heart, and I believe you are not in danger of being crowded there; it is asking you to an old play, indeed, but you will be candid enough to excuse the whole piece for the sake of a few tolerable lines.

For this little while past I have been playing with Statius; we yesterday had a game at quoits together; you will easily forgive me for having broke his head, as you have a little pique to him. I send you my translation †, which I did not engage in because I liked that part of the poem, nor do I now send it to you because I think it deserves it, but merely to show you how I mispend my days.

Third in the labours of the Disc came on,
With sturdy step and slow, Hippomedon;
Artful and strong he poised the well-known weight,
By Phlegyas warn'd, and fired by Mnestheus' fate,
That to avoid, and this to emulate.
His vigorous arm he tried before he flung,
Braced all his nerves, and every sinew strung;

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* Carrying on the allusion to the other history written by Mr. West's grandfather.

† This consisted of about 110 lines, which were sent separately, and as I believe it was Mr. Gray's first attempt in English verse, it is a curiosity not to be entirely withheld from the reader, although it is not my intention to fill these Memoirs with much either of his or his correspondent's productions in this way, yet as a few lines will show how much Mr. Gray had imbibed of Dryden's spirited manner, at this early period, I insert at the end of the letter a specimen of the whole.

Then with a tempest's whirl and wary eye,
Pursued his cast, and hurl'd the orb on high;
The orb on high tenacious of its course,
True to the mighty arm that gave it force,
Far overleaps all bound, and joys to see
Its ancient lord secure of victory.
The theatre's green height and woody wall
Tremble ere it precipitates its fall,
The ponderous mass sinks in the cleaving ground,
While vales and woods and echoing hills rebound.
As when from Ætna's smoking summit broke,
The eyeless Cyclops heaved the craggy rock;
Where Ocean frets beneath the dashing oar,
And parting surges round the vessel roar;
'Twas there he aim'd the meditated harm,
And scarce Ulysses scaped his giant arm.
A tyger's pride the victor bore away,
With native spots and artful labour gay,
A shining border round the margin roll'd,
And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold.

Cambridge, May 8, 1736.

LETTER III.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

I AGREE with you that you have broke Statius's head, but it is in like manner as Apollo broke Hyacinth's, you have foiled him infinitely at his own weapon: I must insist on seeing the rest of your translation, and then I will examine it entire, and compare it with the Latin, and be very wise and severe, and put on an inflexible face, such as becomes the character of a true son of Aristarchus, of hyper-critical memory. In the mean while,

And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold,

is exactly Statius—Summos auro mansueverat ungues. I never knew before that the golden fangs on hammercloths were so old a fashion. Your Hymenéal * I was told was the best in the Cambridge Collection before I saw it, and, indeed, it is no great compliment to tell you I thought it so when I had seen it, but sincerely it pleased me best. Methinks the college bards have run into a strange taste on this occasion. Such soft unmeaning stuff about Venus and Cupid, and Peleus and Thetis, and Zephyrs and Dryads, was never read. As for my poor little Eclogue it has been condemned and beheaded by our Westminster judges; an exordium of about sixteen lines absolutely cut off, and its other limbs quartered in a most barbarous manner. I will send it you in my next as my true and lawful heir, in exclusion of the pretender, who has the impudence to appear under my name.

As yet I have not looked into Sir Isaac. Public disputations I hate; mathematics I reverence; history, morality, and natural philosophy have the greatest charms in my eye; but who can forget poetry? they call it idleness, but it is surely the most enchanting thing in the world, 'ac dulce otium et pœne omni negotio pulchrius.'

I am, dear Sir, yours while I am
Christ Church, May 24, 1736. R. W.

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* Published in the Cambridge collection of verses on the Prince of Wales's marriage. I have not thought it necessary to insert these hexameters, as adulatory verses of this kind, however well written, deserve not to be transmitted to posterity; and, indeed, are usually buried, as they ought to be, in the trash with which they are surrounded. Every person, who feels himself a poet, ought to be above prostituting his powers on such occasions; and extreme youth (as was the case with Mr. Gray) is the only thing that can apologize for his having done it.

THE following letter seems to require some little preface, not so much as it expresses Mr. Gray's juvenile sentiments concerning the mode of our academical education, as that these sentiments prevailed with him through life, and that he often declared them, with so little reserve, as to create him many enemies. It is certain that at the time when he was admitted, and for some years after, Jacobitism, and its concomitant hard drinking, prevailed still at Cambridge, much to the prejudice, not only of good manners but of good letters; for, if this spirit was then on the decline, it was not extinguished till after the year 1745. But we see (as was natural enough in a young man) he laid the blame rather on the mode of education than the mode of the times; and to this error, the uncommon proficiency he had made at Eton in classical learning might contribute, as he found himself in a situation where that species of merit held not the first rank. However this be, it was necessary not to omit this feature of his mind, when employed in drawing a general likeness of it; and what colours could be found so forcible as his own, to express its true light and shadow? I would further observe, that whatever truth there might be in his satire at the time it was written, it can by no means affect the present state of the university. There is usually a much greater fluctuation of taste and manners in an academical, than a national body; occasioned (to use a scholastic metaphor) by that very quick succession of its component parts, which often goes near to destroy its personal identity. Whatever therefore may be true of such a society at one time, may be, and generally is, ten years after, absolutely false.

LETTER IV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

YOU must know that I do not take degrees, and, after this term, shall have nothing more of College impertinencies to undergo, which I trust will be some pleasure to you, as it is a great one to me. I have endured lectures daily and hourly since I came last, supported by the hopes of being shortly at full liberty to give myself up to my friends and classical companions, who, poor souls! though I see them fallen into great contempt with most people here, yet I cannot help sticking to them, and out of a spirit of obstinacy (I think) love them the better for it; and, indeed, what can I do else? Must I plunge into metaphysics? Alas! I cannot see in the dark; nature has not furnished me with the optics of a cat. Must I pore upon mathematics? Alas! I cannot see in too much light; I am no eagle. It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly; and if these be the profits of life, give me the amusements of it. The people I behold all around me, it seems, know all this and more, and yet I do not know one of them who inspires me with any ambition of being like him. Surely it was of this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known by the name of Babylon, that the prophet spoke when he said, 'the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall build there, and satyrs shall dance there; their forts and towers shall be a den for ever, a joy of wild asses; there shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and

gather under her shadow; it shall be a court of dragons; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.' You see here is a pretty collection of desolate animals, which is verified in this town to a tittle, and perhaps it may also allude to your habitation, for you know all types may be taken by abundance of handles; however, I defy your owls to match mine.

If the default of your spirits and nerves be nothing but the effect of the hyp, I have no more to say. We all must submit to that wayward Queen; I too in no small degree own her sway,

I feel her influence while I speak her power.

But if it be a real distemper, pray take more care of your health, if not for your own at least for our sakes, and do not be so soon weary of this little world: I do not know what *refined friendships you may have contracted in the other, but pray do not be in a hurry to see your acquaintance above; among your terrestrial familiars, however, though I say it that should not say it, there positively is not one that has a greater esteem for you than

Yours most sincerely, &c.

Peterhouse, Dec. 1736.

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* This thought is very juvenile, but perhaps he meant to ridicule the affected manner of Mrs. Rowe's letters of the dead to the living; a book which was, I believe, published about this time.

LETTER V.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

I CONGRATULATE you on your being about to leave college *, and rejoice much you carry no degrees with you. For I would not have you dignified, and I not, for the world, you would have insulted me so. My eyes, such as they are, like yours, are neither metaphysical nor mathematical; I have, nevertheless, a great respect for your connoisseurs that way, but am always contented to be their humble admirer. Your collection of desolate animals pleased me much; but Oxford, I can assure you, has her owls that match yours, and the prophecy has certainly a squint that way. Well, you are leaving this dismal land of bondage, and which way are you turning your face? Your friends, indeed, may be happy in you, but what will you do with your classic companions? An inn of court is as horrid a place as a college, and a moot case is as dear to gentle dulness as a syllogism. But wherever you go, let me beg you not to throw poetry 'like a nauseous weed away:' cherish its sweets in your bosom; they will serve you now and then to correct the disgusting sober follies of the common law, 'misce stultitiam consiliis brevem, dulce est desipere in loco;' so said Horace to Virgil, those two sons of Anac in poetry,

* I suspect that Mr. West mistook his correspondent; who, in saying he did not take degrees, meant only to let his friend know that he should soon be released from lectures and disputations. It is certain that Mr. Gray continued at college near two years after the time he wrote the preceding letter.

and so say I to you, in this degenerate land of pigmies,

Mix with your grave designs a little pleasure;
Each day of business has its hour of leisure.

In one of these hours I hope, dear sir, you will sometimes think of me, write to me, and know me yours,

Ἐξαύδα, μὴ κεὐθε νόῳ, ἵνα εἴδομεν ἄμφω·

that is, write freely to me and openly, as I do to you, and to give you a proof of it I have sent you an elegy * of Tibullus translated. Tibullus, you must know, is my favourite elegiac poet; for his language is more elegant and his thoughts more natural than Ovid's. Ovid excels him only in wit, of which no poet had more in my opinion. The reason I choose so melancholy a kind of poesy, is because my low spirits and constant ill health (things in me not imaginary, as you surmise, but too real, alas! and, I fear, constitutional) 'have tuned my heart to elegies of woe;' and this likewise is the reason why I am the most irregular thing alive at college, for you may depend upon it I value my health above what they call discipline. As for this poor unlicked thing of an elegy, pray criticise it unmercifully, for I send it with that intent. Indeed your late translation of Statius might have deterred me, but I know you are not more able to excel others, than you are apt to forgive the want of excellence, especially when it is found in the productions of

Your most sincere friend.

Christ Church, Dec. 22, 1736.

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* This I omit for the reason given in a preceding note, and for another also, because it is not written in alternate but heroic rhyme; which I think is not the species of English measure adapted to elegiac poetry.

LETTER VI.*

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

YOU can never weary me with the repetition of any thing that makes me sensible of your kindness; since that has been the only idea of any social happiness that I have almost ever received, and which (begging your pardon for thinking so differently from you in such cases) I would by no means have parted with for an exemption from all the uneasinesses mixed with it: but it would be unjust to imagine my taste was any rule for yours; for which reason my letters are shorter and less frequent than they would be, had I any materials but myself to entertain you with. Love and brown sugar must be a poor regale for one of your goût, and, alas! you know I am by trade a grocer †.

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* Mr. Walpole, on my informing him that it was my intention to publish the principal part of Mr. Gray's correspondence with Mr. West, very obligingly communicated to me the letters which he had also received from Mr. Gray at the same period. From this collection I have selected such as I thought would be most likely to please the generality of readers; omitting, though with regret, many of the more sprightly and humorous sort, because either, from their personality, or some other local circumstance, they did not seem so well adapted to hit the public taste. I shall say more upon this subject in a subsequent section, when I give my idea of Mr. Gray's peculiar vein of humour.

† i. e. A man who deals only in coarse and ordinary wares: to these he compares the plain

Scandal (if I had any) is a merchandise you do not profess dealing in; now and then, indeed, and to oblige a friend, you may perhaps slip a little out of your pocket, as a decayed gentlewoman would a piece of right mecklin, or a little quantity of run tea, but this only now and then, not to make a practice of it. Monsters appertaining to this climate you have seen already, both wet and dry. So you perceive within how narrow bounds my pen is circumscribed, and the whole contents of my share in our correspondence may be reduced under the two heads of 1st, You, 2dly, I; the first is, indeed, a subject to expatiate upon, but you might laugh at me for talking about what I do not understand; the second is so tiny, so tiresome, that you shall hear no more of it than that it is ever

Yours.

Peterhouse, Dec. 23, 1736.

LETTER VII.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

I HAVE been very ill, and am still hardly recovered. Do you remember Elegy 5th, Book the 3d, of Tibullus, Vos tenet, &c. and do you remember a letter of Mr. Pope's, in sickness, to Mr. Steele? This melancholy elegy and this melancholy letter I turned into a more melancholy epistle of my own, during my sickness, in the way of imita-

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sincerity of his own friendship, undisguised by flattery; which, had he chosen to carry on the allusion, he might have termed the trade of a confectioner.

tion; and this I send to you and my friends at Cambridge, not to divert them, for it cannot, but merely to show them how sincere I was when sick: I hope my sending it to them now may convince them I am no less sincere, though perhaps more simple, when well.

AD AMICOS.*

Yes, happy youths, on Camus's sedgy side,
You feel each joy that friendship can divide;
Each realm of science and of art explore,
And with the ancient blend the modern lore.
Studious alone to learn whate'er may tend
To raise the genius or the heart to mend;
Now pleased along the cloister'd walk you rove,
And trace the verdant mazes of the grove,
Where social oft, and oft alone, ye choose
To catch the zephyr and to court the muse.
Mean time at me (while all devoid of art
These lines give back the image of my heart)
At me the pow'r that comes or soon or late,
Or aims, or seems to aim, the dart of fate;
From you remote, methinks, alone I stand
Like some sad exile in a desert land;
Around no friends their lenient care to join
In mutual warmth, and mix their heart with mine.
Or real pains, or those which fancy raise,
For ever blot the sunshine of my days;
To sickness still, and still to grief a prey,
Health turns from me her rosy face away.

Just heav'n! what sin, ere life begins to bloom,
Devotes my head untimely to the tomb?

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* Almost all Tibullus's elegy is imitated in this little piece, from whence his transition to Mr. Pope's letter is very artfully contrived, and bespeaks a degree of judgment much beyond Mr. West's years.

Did e'er this hand against a brother's life
Drug the dire bowl or point the murd'rous knife?
Did e'er this tongue the slanderer's tale proclaim,
Or madly violate my Maker's name?
Did e'er this heart betray a friend or foe,
Or know a thought but all the world might know?
As yet just started from the lists of time,
My growing years have scarcely told their prime;
Useless, as yet, through life I've idly run,
No pleasures tasted, and few duties done.
* Ah, who, ere autumn's mellowing suns appear,
Would pluck the promise of the vernal year;
Or, ere the grapes their purple hue betray,
Tear the crude cluster from the mourning spray?
Stern Power of Fate, whose ebon sceptre rules
The Stygian deserts and Cimmerian pools,
Forbear, nor rashly smite my youthful heart,
A victim yet unworthy of thy dart;
Ah, stay till age shall blast my withering face,
Shake in my head, and falter in my pace;
Then aim the shaft, then meditate the blow,
† And to the dead my willing shade shall go.

How weak is Man to Reason's judging eye!
Born in this moment, in the next we die;
Part mortal clay, and part ethereal fire,
Too proud to creep, too humble to aspire.
In vain our plans of happiness we raise,
Pain is our lot, and patience is our praise;

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* Quid fraudare juvat vitem crescentibus uvis,
Et modo nata malâ vellere poma manu?

So the original. The paraphrase seems to me infinitely more beautiful. There is a peculiar blemish in the second line, arising from the synonimes *mala* and *poma*.

† Here he quits Tibullus; the ten following verses have but a remote reference to Mr. Pope's letter.

Wealth, lineage, honours, conquest, or a throne,
Are what the wise would fear to call their own.
Health is at best a vain precarious thing,
And fair-faced youth is ever on the wing;
* 'Tis like the stream, beside whose wat'ry bed
Some blooming plant exalts his flow'ry head;
Nursed by the wave the spreading branches rise,
Shade all the ground and flourish to the skies;
The waves the while beneath in secret flow,
And undermine the hollow bank below;
Wide and more wide the waters urge their way,
Bare all the roots and on their fibres prey.
Too late the plant bewails his foolish pride,
And sinks, untimely, in the whelming tide.

But why repine? does life deserve my sigh?
Few will lament my loss whene'er I die.
† For those the wretches I despise or hate,
I neither envy nor regard their fate.
For me, whene'er all-conquering Death shall spread
His wings around my unrepining head,

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* 'Youth, at the very best, is but the betrayer of human life in a gentler and smoother manner than age; 'tis like the stream that nourishes a plant upon a bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but at the same time is undermining it at the root in secret.'—Pope's Works, vol. 7, page 254, 1st edit. Warburton.—Mr. West, by prolonging his paraphrase of this simile, gives it additional beauty from that very circumstance, but he ought to have introduced it by Mr. Pope's own thought, 'Youth is a betrayer;' his couplet preceding the simile conveys too general a reflection.

† 'I am not at all uneasy at the thought that many men, whom I never had any esteem for, are likely to enjoy this world after me.'—Vide ibid.

* I care not; though this face be seen no more,
The world will pass as cheerful as before;
Bright as before the day-star will appear,
The fields as verdant, and the skies as clear;
Nor storms nor comets will my doom declare,
Nor signs on earth, nor portents in the air;
Unknown and silent will depart my breath,
Nor Nature e'er take notice of my death.
Yet some there are (ere spent my vital days)
Within whose breasts my tomb I wish to raise.
Loved in my life, lamented in my end,
Their praise would crown me as their precepts mend:
To them may these fond lines my name endear,
Not from the Poet but the Friend sincere.

Christ Church, July 4, 1737.

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* 'The morning after my exit the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green;' so far Mr. West copies his original, but instead of the following part of the sentence, 'People will laugh as heartily and marry as fast as they used to do,' he inserts a more solemn idea,

Nor storms nor comets, &c.

justly perceiving that the elegiac turn of his epistle would not admit so ludicrous a thought, as was in its place in Mr. Pope's familiar letter: so that we see, young as he was, he had obtained the art of judiciously selecting, one of the first provinces of good taste.

LETTER VIII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

AFTER a month's expectation of you, and a fortnight's despair, at Cambridge, I am come to town, and to better hopes of seeing you. If what you sent me last be the product of your melancholy, what may I not expect from your more cheerful hours? For by this time the ill health that you complain of is (I hope) quite departed; though, if I were self-interested, I ought to wish for the continuance of any thing that could be the occasion of so much pleasure to me. Low spirits are my true and faithful companions; they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do; nay, and pay visits, and will even affect to be jocose, and force a feeble laugh with me; but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world. However, when you come, I believe they must undergo the fate of all humble companions, and be discarded. Would I could turn them to the same use that you have done, and make an Apollo of them. If they could write such verses with me, not hartshorn, nor spirit of amber, nor all that furnishes the closet of an apothecary's widow, should persuade me to part with them: but, while I write to you, I hear the bad news of Lady Walpole's death on Saturday night last. Forgive me if the thought of what my poor Horace must feel on that account, obliges me to have done in reminding you that I am

Yours, &c.

London, Aug. 22 1737.

LETTER IX.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

I WAS hindered in my last, and so could not give you all the trouble I would have done. The description of a road, which your coach wheels have so often honoured, it would be needless to give you; suffice it that I arrived safe *at my uncle's, who is a great hunter in imagination; his dogs take up every chair in the house, so I am forced to stand at this present writing; and though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the field, yet he continues still to regale his ears and nose with their comfortable noise and stink. He holds me mighty cheap, I perceive, for walking when I should ride, and reading when I should hunt. My comfort amidst all this is, that I have at the distance of half a mile, through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well as I do may venture to climb, and crags that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were more dangerous: both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds,

* At Burnham in Buckinghamshire.

And as they bow their hoary tops relate,
In murm'ring sounds, the dark decrees of fate;
While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Cling to each leaf and swarm on every bough.

At the foot of one of these squats me I, (il penseroso) and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sportive squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise, before he had an Eve; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there. In this situation I often converse with my Horace, aloud too, that is talk to you, but I do not remember that I ever heard you answer me. I beg pardon for taking all the conversation to myself, but it is entirely your own fault. We have old Mr. Southern at a gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us; he is now seventy-seven years old*, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as agreeable as an old man can be, at least I persuade myself so when I look at him, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko. I shall be in Town in about three weeks. Adieu.

September, 1737.

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* He lived nine years longer, and died at the great age of eighty-six. Mr. Gray always thought highly of his pathetic powers, at the same time that he blamed his ill taste for mixing them so injudiciously with farce, in order to produce that monstrous species of composition called Tragi-comedy.

LETTER X.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.*

I SYMPATHIZE with you in the sufferings which you foresee are coming upon you. We are both at present, I imagine, in no very agreeable situation; for my part I am under the misfortune of having nothing to do, but it is a misfortune which, thank my stars, I can pretty well bear. You are in a confusion of wine, and roaring, and hunting, and tobacco, and, heaven be praised, you too can pretty well bear it; while our evils are no more, I believe we shall not much repine. I imagine, however, you will rather choose to converse with the living dead, that adorn the walls of your apartments, than with the dead living that deck the middles of them; and prefer a picture of still life to the realities of a noisy one, and, as I guess, will imitate what you prefer, and for an hour or two at noon will stick yourself up as formal as if you had been fixed in your frame for these hundred years, with a pink or rose in one hand, and a great seal ring on the other. Your name, I assure you, has been propagated in these countries by a convert of yours, one * *, he has brought over his whole family to you; they were before pretty good Whigs, but now they are absolute Walpolians. We have hardly any body in the parish but knows exactly the dimensions of the hall and saloon at Houghton, and begin to believe that the † lantern is not so great

* At this time with his father at Houghton. Mr. Gray writes from the same place he did before, from his uncle's house in Buckinghamshire.

† A favourite object of Tory satire at the time.

a consumer of the fat of the land as disaffected persons have said: for your reputation, we keep to ourselves your not hunting nor drinking hogan, either of which here would be sufficient to lay your honour in the dust. To-morrow se'nnight I hope to be in Town, and not long after at Cambridge. I am, &c.

Burnham, Sept. 1737.

LETTER XI.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

RECEIVING no answer to my last letter, which I writ above a month ago, I must own I am a little uneasy. The slight shadow of you which I had in Town, has only served to endear you to me the more. The moments I passed with you made a strong impression upon me. I singled you out for a friend, and I would have you know me to be yours, if you deem me worthy.—Alas! Gray, you cannot imagine how miserably my time passes away. My health, and nerves, and spirits are, thank my stars, the very worst, I think, in Oxford. Four-and-twenty hours of pure unalloyed health together are as unknown to me as the 400,000 characters in the Chinese vocabulary. One of my complaints has of late been so over-civil as to visit me regularly once a month—jam certus conviva. This is a painful nervous head-ache, which perhaps you have sometimes heard me speak of before. Give me leave to say, I find no physic comparable to your letters. If, as it is said in Ecclesiasticus, 'Friendship be the physic of the mind,' prescribe to me, dear Gray, as often and as much as you think proper, I shall be a most obedient patient.

Non ego
Fidis irascar medicis, offendar amicis.

I venture here to write you down a Greek epigram *, which I lately turned into Latin, and hope you will excuse it.

Perspicui puerum ludentem in margine rivi
Immersit vitreæ limpidus error aquæ:
At gelido ut mater moribundum e flumine traxit
Credula, et amplexu funus inane fovet;
Paulatim puer in dilecto pectore, somno
Languidus, æternum lumina composuit.

Adieu! I am going to my tutor's lectures on one Puffendorff, a very jurisprudent author as you shall read on a summer's day.

Believe me yours, &c.

Christ Church, Dec. 2, 1738.

LETTER XII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

LITERAS mi Favonî † abs te demum, nudiustertiùs credo, accepi planè mellitas, nisi fortè quà de

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* Of Posidippus. Vide Anthologia, H. Stephan. p. 220. Mr. Gray in his MS. notes to this edition of the Anthologia (of which I shall give an account in a subsequent section) inserts this translation, and adds 'Descriptio pulcherrima et quæ tenuem illum Græcorum spiritum mirificè sapit;' and in conclusion, 'Posidippus inter principes Anthologiæ poetas emicat; Ptolemæi Philadelphi seculo vixit.'

† Mr. Gray in all his Latin compositions, addressed to this gentleman, calls him Favonius, in allusion to the name of West.

ægritudine quâdam tuâ dictum: atque hoc sane mihi habitum est non paulò acerbiùs, quod te capitis morbo implicitum esse intellexi. Oh morbum mihi quam odiosum! qui de industriâ id agit, ut ego in singulos menses, Dii boni! quantis jucunditatibus orbarer! quàm ex animo mihi dolendum est, quod

Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid!

Salutem, mehercule, nolo, tam parvipendas, atque amicis tam improbè consulas: quanquam tute fortassis æstuas angusto limite mundi, viamque (ut dicitur) affectas Olympo; nos tamen non esse tam sublimes, utpote qui hisce in sordibus et fæce diutius paululum versari volumus, reminiscendum est: illæ tuæ Musæ, si te ament modo, derelinqui paulisper non nimis ægrè patientur: indulge, amabo te, plusquam soles, corporis exercitationibus: magis te campus habeat, aprico magis te dedas otio, ut ne id ingenium, quod tam cultum curas, diligenter nimis dum foves, officiosarum matrum ritu, interimas. Vide quæso, quam ἰατριχῶς tecum agimus,

ἦδ ἐπίθήσω
Φάρμαχ' ἅ κεν πάυσησι μελαίναων ὀδυνάων.

si de his pharmacis non satis liquet; sunt festivitates meræ, sunt facetiæ et risus; quos ego equidem, si adhibere nequeo, tamen ad præcipiendum (ut medicorum fere mos est) certè satis sim: id, quod poeticè sub finem epistolæ lusisti, mihi gratissimum quidem accidit; admodum Latinè coctum et conditum tetrasticon, Græcam tamen illam ἀφελείαν mirificè sapit: tu, quod restat, vide, sodes, hujusce hominis ignorantiam; cum, unde hoc tibi sit depromptum, (ut fatear) prorsus nescio: sane ego equidem nihil in capsis reperio quo tibi minimæ partis solutio fiat. Vale, et me, ut soles, ama.

A. D. 11 Kalend. Februar.

LETTER XIII.*

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

I OUGHT to answer you in Latin, but I feel I dare not enter the lists with you—cupidum, pater optime, vires deficiunt. Seriously you write in that language with a grace and an Augustan urbanity that amazes me: your Greek too is perfect in its kind. And here let me wonder that a man, longè Græcorum doctissimus, should be at a loss for the verse and chapter whence my epigram is taken. I am sorry I have not my Aldus with me, that I might satisfy your curiosity; but he with all my other literary folks are left at Oxford, and therefore you must still rest in suspense. I thank you again and again for your medical prescription. I know very well that those 'risus, festivitates et facetiæ' would contribute greatly to my cure, but then you must be my apothecary as well as physician, and make up the dose as well as direct it; send me, therefore, an electuary of these drugs, made up 'secundùm artem, et eris mihi magnus Apollo,' in both his capacities as a god of poets and god of physicians. Wish me joy of leaving my college, and leave yours as fast as you can. I shall be settled at the Temple very soon.

Dartmouth-street, Feb. 21, 1737-8.

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* This was written in French, but as I doubted whether it would stand the test of polite criticism so well as the preceding would of learned, I chose to translate so much of it as I thought necessary in order to preserve the chain of correspondence.

LETTER XIV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

* BARBARAS ædes aditure mecum
Quas Eris semper fovet inquieta,
Lis ubi latè sonat, et togatum
Æstuat agmen!

Dulcius quanto, patulis sub ulmi
Hospitæ ramis temerè jacentem
Sic libris horas, tenuiq; inertes
Fallere Musâ?

Sæpe enim curis vagor expeditâ
Mente; dum, blandam meditans Camœnam,
Vix malo rori, meminive seræ
Cedere nocti;

Et, pedes quò me rapiunt, in omni
Colle Parnassum videor videre
Fertilem sylvæ, gelidamq; in omni
Fonte Aganippen.

Risit et Ver me, facilesq; Nymphæ
Nare captantem, nec ineleganti,
Manè quicquid de violis eundo
Surripit aura:

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* I choose to call this delicate Sapphic Ode the first original production of Mr. Gray's Muse; for verses imposed either by schoolmasters or tutors ought not, I think, to be taken into the consideration. There is seldom a verse that flows well from the pen of a real poet if it does not flow voluntarily.

Me reclinatum teneram per herbam;
Quà leves cursus aqua cunque ducit,
Et moras dulci strepitu lapillo
Nectit in omni.

Hæ novo nostrum ferè pectus anno
Simplices curæ tenuere, cœlum
Quamdiù sudum explicuit Favonî
Purior hora:

Otia et campos nec adhuc relinquo,
Nec magis Phœbo Clytie fidelis;
(Ingruant venti licet, et senescat
Mollior æstas.)

Namque, seu, lætos hominum labores
Prataq; et montes recreante curru,
Purpurâ tractus oriens Eōos
Vestit, et auro;

Sedulus servo veneratus orbem
Prodîgum splendoris: amæniori
Sive dilectam meditatur igne
Pingere Calpen;

Usque dum, fulgore magìs magìs jam
Languido circum, variata nubes
Labitur furtim, viridisq; in umbras
Scena recessit.

O ego felix, vice si (nec unquam
Surgerem rursus) simili cadentem
Parca me lenis sineret quieto
Fallere Letho!

Multà flagranti radiisq; cincto
Integris ah! quam nihil inviderem,
Cum Dei ardentes medius quadrigas
Sentit Olympus?

Ohe! amicule noster, et unde, sodes tu μουσοπάτακτος adeò repente evasisti? jam te rogitaturum credo. Nescio hercle, sic planè habet. Quicquid enim nugarum ἐπὶ σχολῆς inter ambulandum in palimpsesto scriptitavi, hisce te maxumè impertiri visum est, quippe quem probare, quod meum est, aut certè ignoscere solitum probè novi: bonâ tuâ veniâ sit si fortè videar in fine subtristior; nam risui jamdudum salutem dixi; etiam paulò mœstitiæ studiosiorem factum scias, promptumque, Καινοῖς παλαιὰ δακρύοις στένειν κακά.

O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
Ducentium ortus ex animo; quater
Felix! in imo qui scatentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.

Sed de me satis. Cura ut valeas.
Jun. 1738.

LETTER XV.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

I RETURN you a thousand thanks for your elegant ode, and wish you every joy you wish yourself in it. But, take my word for it, you will never spend so agreeable a day here as you describe; alas! the sun with us only rises to show us the way to Westminster-Hall. Nor must I forget thanking you for your little Alcaic fragment. The optic Naiads are infinitely obliged to you.

I was last week at Richmond Lodge, with Mr. Walpole, for two days, and dined with * Cardinal Fleury: as far as my short sight can go, the cha-

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* Sir Robert Walpole.

racter of his great art and penetration is very just; he is indeed

Nulli penetrabilis astro.

I go to-morrow to Epsom, where I shall be for about a month. Excuse me, I am in haste*, but believe me always, &c.

August 29, 1738.

LETTER XVI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

MY dear sir, I should say † Mr. Inspector General of the Exports and Imports; but that appellation would make but an odd figure in conjunction with the three familiar monosyllables above written, for

Non benè conveniunt nec in unâ sede morantur
Majestas et amor.

Which is, being interpreted, Love does not live at the Custom-house; however, by what style, title, or denomination soever you choose to be dignified

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* Mr. West seems to have been, indeed, in haste when he writ this letter; else, surely, his fine taste would have led him to have been more profuse in his praise of the Alcaic fragment. He might (I think) have said, without paying too extravagant a compliment to Mr. Gray's genius, that no poet of the Augustan age ever produced four more perfect lines, or what would sooner impose upon the best critic, as being a genuine ancient composition.

† Mr. Walpole was just named to that post, which he exchanged soon after for that of Usher of the Exchequer.

or distinguished hereafter, these three words will stick by you like a burr, and you can no more get quit of these and your christian name than St. Anthony could of his pig. My motions at present (which you are pleased to ask after) are much like those of a pendulum or (* Dr. Longically speaking) oscillatory. I swing from Chapel or Hall home, and from home to Chapel or Hall. All the strange incidents that happen in my journeys and returns I shall be sure to acquaint you with; the most wonderful is, that it now rains exceedingly; this has refreshed the † prospect, as the way for the most part lies between green fields on either hand, terminated with buildings at some distance, castles, I presume, and of great antiquity. The roads are very good, being, as I suspect, the works of Julius Cæsar's army, for they still preserve, in many places, the appearance of a pavement in pretty good repair, and, if they were not so near home, might perhaps be as much admired as the Via Appia; there are at present several rivulets to be crossed, and which serve to enliven the view all around. The country is exceeding fruitful in ravens and such black cattle; but, not to tire you with my travels, I abruptly conclude.

Yours, &c.

August 1738.

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* Dr. Long, the master of Pembroke-Hall, at this time read lectures in experimental philosophy.

† All that follows is a humorously hyperbolic description of the quadrangle of Peter-House.

LETTER XVII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

I AM coming away all so fast, and leaving behind me, without the least remorse, all the beauties of Sturbridge Fair. Its white bears may roar, its apes may wring their hands, and crocodiles cry their eyes out, all's one for that; I shall not once visit them, nor so much as take my leave. The university has published a severe edict against schismatical congregations, and created half a dozen new little procterlings to see its orders executed, being under mighty apprehensions lest * Henley and his gilt tub should come to the fair and seduce their young ones: but their pains are to small purpose, for lo, after all, he is not coming.

I am at this instant in the very agonies of leaving college, and would not wish the worst of my enemies a worse situation. If you knew the dust, the old boxes, the bedsteads, and tutors that are about my ears, you would look upon this letter as a great effort of my resolution and unconcernedness in the midst of evils. I fill up my paper with a loose sort of version of that scene in Pastor Fido that begins, Care selve beati †.

Sept. 1738.

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* Orator Henley.

† This Latin version is extremely elegiac, but as it is only a version, I do not insert it. Mr. Gray did not begin to learn Italian till about a year and a half before he translated this scene; and I find amongst his papers an English translation of part of the 4th Canto of Tasso's Gerusalemma Liberata, done previously to this, which has great merit. In a letter to Mr. West, dated March, 1737, he says,

LETTER XVIII.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

I THANK you again and again for your two last most agreeable letters. They could not have come more a-propos; I was without any books to divert me, and they supplied the want of every thing: I made them my classics in the country; they were my Horace and Tibullus—Non ita loquor assentandi causâ ut probè nosti si me noris, verum quia sic mea est sententia. I am but just come to town, and, to show you my esteem of your favours, I venture to send you by the penny post, to your father's, what you will find on the next page; I hope it will reach you soon after your arrival,

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'I learn Italian like any dragon, and in two months am got through the 16th book of Tasso, whom I hold in great admiration: I want you to learn too, that I may know your opinion of him; nothing can be easier than that language to any one who knows Latin and French already, and there are few so copious and expressive.' In the same letter he tells him, 'that his College has set him a versifying on a public occasion,' (viz. those verses which are called Tripus) 'on the theme of Luna est habitabilis.' The Poem, I believe, is to be found in the Musæ Etonenses. I would further observe, on this occasion, that though Mr. Gray had lately read and translated Statius, yet when he attempted composition, his judgment immediately directed him to the best model of versification; accordingly his hexameters are, as far as modern ones can be, after the manner of Virgil: they move in the succession of his pauses, and close with his elisions.

your boxes out of the waggon, yourself out of the coach, and tutors out of your memory.

Adieu; we shall see one another, I hope, to-morrow.

ELEGIA.

Quod mihi tam gratæ misisti dona Camœnæ,
Qualia Mænalius Pan Deus ipse velit,
Amplector te, Graie, et toto corde reposco,
Oh desiderium jam nimis usque meum:
Et mihi rura placent, et me quoq; sæpe volentem
Duxerunt Dryades per sua prata Deæ;
Sicubi lympha fugit liquido pede, sive virentem,
Magna decus nemoris, quercus opacat humum:
Illuc mane novo vagor, illuc vespere sero,
Et, noto ut jacui gramine, nota cano.
Nec nostræ ignorant divinam Amaryllida sylvæ:
Ah, si desit amor, nil mihi rura placent.
Ille jugis habitat Deus, ille in vallibus imis,
Regnat et in Cœlis, regnat et Oceano;
Ille gregem taurosq; domat; sæviq; leonem
Seminis; ille feros, ultus Adonin, apros:
Quin et fervet amore nemus, ramoq; sub omni
Concentu tremulo plurima gaudet avis.
Duræ etiam in sylvis agitant connubia plantæ,
Dura etiam et fertur saxa animasse Venus.
Durior et saxis, et robore durior ille est,
Sincero siquis pectore amare vetat:
Non illi in manibus sanctum deponere pignus,
Non illi arcanum cor aperire velim;
Nescit amicitias, teneros qui nescit amores:
Ah! si nulla Venus, nil mihi rura placent.
Me licet a patriâ longè in tellure juberent
Externâ positum ducere fata dies;
Si vultus modo amatus adesset, non ego contra
Plorarem magnos voce querente Deos.
At dulci in gremio curarum oblivia ducens
Nil cuperem præter posse placere meæ;
Nec bona fortunæ aspiciens, neq; munera regum,
Illa intrà optarem brachia cara mori.

Sept. 17, 1738.

Mr. Gray, on his return to town, continued at his father's house in Cornhill till the March following, in which interval Mr. Walpole being disinclined to enter so early into the business of parliament, prevailed on Sir Robert Walpole to permit him to go abroad, and on Mr. Gray (as was said before) to be the companion of his travels. Mr. West spent the greatest part of the winter with his mother and sister at Epsom, during which time a letter or two more passed between the two friends. But these I think it unnecessary to insert, as I have already given sufficient specimens of the blossoms of their genius. The reader of taste and candour will, I trust, consider them only as such; yet will be led to think that, as the one produced afterwards 'fruits worthy of paradise,' the other would also have produced them, had he lived to a more mature age.

END OF THE FIRST SECTION.

SECTION II.

AS I allot this section entirely to that part of Mr. Gray's life, which he spent in travelling through France and Italy, my province will be chiefly that of an editor; and my only care to select from a large collection of letters written to his parents and to his friend Mr. West, those parts which, I imagine, will be most likely either to inform or amuse the reader. The multiplicity of accounts, published, both before and after the time when these letters were written, of those very places which Mr. Gray describes, will necessarily take from them much of their novelty; yet the elegant ease of his epistolary style has a charm in it for all readers of true taste, that will make every apology of this sort needless. They will perceive, that as these letters were written without even the most distant view of publication, they are essentially different in their manner of description from any others that have either preceded or followed them; add to this, that they are interspersed occasionally with some exquisitely finished pieces of Latin poetry, which he composed on the spot for the entertainment of his friend. But not to anticipate any part of the reader's pleasure, I shall only further say, to forewarn him of a disappointment, that this correspondence is defective towards the end, and includes no description either of Venice or its territory; the last places which Mr. Gray visited. This defect was occasioned by an unfortunate disagreement between him and Mr. Walpole, arising

from the difference of their tempers. The former being, from his earliest years, curious, pensive, and philosophical; the latter gay, lively, and, consequently, inconsiderate: * this therefore occasioned their separation at Reggio. Mr. Gray went before him to Venice; and staying there only till he could find means of returning to England, he made the best of his way home, repassing the Alps, and following almost the same route through France by which he had before gone to Italy.

LETTER I.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Amiens, April 1, N. S. 1739.

AS we made but a very short journey to-day, and came to our inn early, I sit down to give you some account of our expedition. On the 29th (according to the style here) we left Dover at twelve at noon, and with a pretty brisk gale, which pleased every body mighty well, except myself, who was extremely sick the whole time, we reached Calais by five: the weather changed, and it began to snow hard the minute we got into the harbour, where

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* In justice to the memory of so respectable a friend, Mr. Walpole enjoins me to charge himself with the chief blame in their quarrel; confessing that more attention and complaisance, more deference to a warm friendship, superior judgment and prudence, might have prevented a rupture that gave much uneasiness to them both, and a lasting concern to the survivor; though in the year 1744 a reconciliation was effected between them, by a lady who wished well to both parties.

we took the boat, and soon landed. Calais is an exceeding old, but very pretty town, and we hardly saw any thing there that was not so new and so different from England, that it surprised us agreeably. We went the next morning to the great church, and were at high mass (it being Easter Monday). We saw also the convent of the Capuchins, and the Nuns of St. Dominic; with these last we held much conversation, especially with an English Nun, a Mrs. Davis, of whose work I sent you, by the return of the pacquet, a letter-case to remember her by. In the afternoon we took a post-chaise (it still snowing very hard) for Boulogne, which was only eighteen miles further. This chaise is a strange sort of conveyance, of much greater use than beauty, resembling an ill-shaped chariot, only with the door opening before instead of the side; three horses draw it, one between the shafts, and the other two on each side, on one of which the postillion rides, and drives too*: this vehicle will, upon occasion, go fourscore miles a day, but Mr. Walpole, being in no hurry, chooses to make easy journeys of it, and they are easy ones indeed; for the motion is much like that of a sedan: we go about six miles an hour, and commonly change horses at the end of it: it is true they are no very graceful steeds, but they go well, and through roads which they say are bad for France, but to me they seem gravel walks and bowling-greens; in short, it would be the finest travelling in the world, were it not for the inns, which are mostly terrible places indeed. But to describe our progress somewhat more regularly, we came into Boulogne when it was almost dark, and went out pretty early on Tuesday morning; so that all I can say about it is, that it is a large, old,

* This was before the introduction of post-chaises here, else it would not have appeared a circumstance worthy notice.

fortified town, with more English in it than French. On Tuesday we were to go to Abbéville, seventeen leagues, or fifty-one short English miles; but by the way we dined at Montreuil, much to our hearts' content, on stinking mutton cutlets, addled eggs, and ditch water. Madame the hostess made her appearance in long lappets of bone lace and a sack of linseywoolsey. We supped and lodged pretty well at Abbéville, and had time to see a little of it before we came out this morning. There are seventeen convents in it, out of which we saw the chapels of the Minims and the Carmelite Nuns. We are now come further thirty miles to Amiens, the chief city of the province of Picardy. We have seen the cathedral, which is just what that of Canterbury must have been before the reformation. It is about the same size, a huge Gothic building, beset on the outside with thousands of small statues, and within adorned with beautiful painted windows, and a vast number of chapels dressed out in all their finery of altar-pieces, embroidery, gilding, and marble. Over the high altar are preserved, in a very large wrought shrine of massy gold, the relics of St. Firmin, their patron saint. We went also to the chapels of the Jesuits and Ursuline Nuns, the latter of which is very richly adorned. To-morrow we shall lie at Clermont, and next day reach Paris. The country we have passed through hitherto has been flat, open, but agreeably diversified with villages, fields well-cultivated, and little rivers. On every hillock is a windmill, a crucifix, or a Virgin Mary dressed in flowers, and a sarcenet robe; one sees not many people or carriages on the road; now and then indeed you meet a strolling friar, a countryman with his great muff, or a woman riding astride on a little ass, with short petticoats, and a great head-dress of blue wool. * * *

LETTER II.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Paris, April 12, 1739.

ENFIN donc me voici à Paris. Mr. Walpole is gone out to supper at Lord Conway's, and here I remain alone, though invited too. Do not think I make a merit of writing to you preferably to a good supper; for these three days we have been here have actually given me an aversion to eating in general. If hunger be the best sauce to meat, the French are certainly the worst cooks in the world; for what tables we have seen have been so delicately served, and so profusely, that, after rising from one of them, one imagines it impossible ever to eat again. And now, if I tell you all I have in my head, you will believe me mad, mais n'importe, courage, allons! for if I wait till my head grow clear and settle a little, you may stay long enough for a letter. Six days have we been coming hither, which other people do in two; they have not been disagreeable ones; through a fine, open country, admirable roads, and in an easy conveyance; the inns not absolutely intolerable, and images quite unusual presenting themselves on all hands. At Amiens we saw the fine cathedral, and eat paté de perdix; passed through the park of Chantilly by the Duke of Bourbon's palace, which we only beheld as we passed; broke down at Lausarche; stopped at St. Denis, saw all the beautiful monuments of the Kings of France, and the vast treasures of the abbey, rubies, and emeralds as big as small eggs, crucifixes, and vows, crowns and reliquaries, of inestimable value; but of all their curiosities the thing the most to our tastes, and

which they indeed do the justice to esteem the glory of their collection, was a vase of an entire onyx, measuring at least five inches over, three deep, and of great thickness. It is at least two thousand years old; the beauty of the stone and sculpture upon it (representing the mysteries of Bacchus) beyond expression admirable: we have dreamed of it ever since. The jolly old Benedictine, that showed us the treasures, had in his youth been ten years a soldier; he laughed at all the relics, was very full of stories, and mighty obliging. On Saturday evening we got to Paris, and were driving through the streets a long while before we knew where we were. The minute we came, voilà Milors Holdernesse, Conway, and his brother; all stayed supper, and till two o'clock in the morning, for here nobody ever sleeps; it is not the way: next day go to dine at my Lord Holdernesse's; there was the Abbé Prevôt, author of the Cleveland, and several other pieces much esteemed: the rest were English. At night we went to the Pandore; a spectácle literally, for it is nothing but a beautiful piece of machinery of three scenes. The first represents the chaos, and by degrees the separation of the elements. The second, the temple of Jupiter, and the giving of the box to Pandora. The third, the opening of the box, and all the mischiefs that ensued. An absurd design, but executed in the highest perfection, and that in one of the finest theatres in the world; it is the grande salle des machines in the Palais des Tuilleries. Next day dined at Lord Waldegrave's; then to the opera. Imagine to yourself for the drama four acts * entirely unconnected with each other, each founded on some little history, skilfully taken out of an

* The French opera has only three acts, but often a prologue on a different subject, which (as Mr. Walpole informs me, who saw it at the same time) was the case in this very representation.

ancient author, e. g. Ovid's Metamorphoses, &c. and with great address converted into a French piece of gallantry. For instance, that which I saw, called the Ballet de la Paix, had its first act built upon the story of Nireus. Homer having said he was the handsomest man of his time, the poet, imagining such a one could not want a mistress, has given him one. These two come in and sing sentiment in lamentable strains, neither air nor recitative; only, to one's great joy, they are every now and then interrupted by a dance, or (to one's great sorrow) by a chorus that borders the stage from one end to the other, and screams, past all power of simile to represent. The second act was Baucis and Philemon. Baucis is a beautiful young shepherdess, and Philemon her swain. Jupiter falls in love with her, but nothing will prevail upon her; so it is all mighty well, and the chorus sing and dance the praises of Constancy. The two other acts were about Iphis and Ianthe, and the judgment of Paris. Imagine, I say, all this transacted by cracked voices, trilling divisions upon two notes and a half, accompanied by an orchestra of humstrums, and a whole house more attentive than if Farinelli sung, and you will almost have formed a just notion of the thing *. Our astonishment at their absurdity you can never conceive; we had enough to do to express it by screaming an hour louder than the whole dramatis personæ. We have also seen twice the Comedie Françoise; first, the Mahomet Second, a tragedy that has had a

* Our author's sentiments here seem to correspond entirely with those which J. J. Rousseau afterwards published in his famous Lettre sur la Musique Françoise. In a French letter also, which Mr. Gray writ to his friend soon after this, he calls their music 'des miaulemens et des heurlemens effroyables, melés avec un tintamarre du diable: voilà la musique Françoise en abregé.'

great run of late; and the thing itself does not want its beauties, but the actors are beyond measure delightful. Mademoiselle Gaussin (M. Voltaire's Zara) has with a charming (though little) person the most pathetic tone of voice, the finest expression in her face, and most proper action imaginable. There is also a Dufrêne, who did the chief character, a handsome man and a prodigious fine actor. The second we saw was the Philosophe marié, and here they performed as well in comedy; there is a Mademoiselle Quinault, somewhat in Mrs. Clive's way, and a Monsieur Grandval, in the nature of Wilks, who is the genteelest thing in the world. There are several more would be much admired in England, and many (whom we have not seen) much celebrated here. Great part of our time is spent in seeing churches and palaces full of fine pictures, &c. the quarter of which is not yet exhausted. For my part, I could entertain myself this month merely with the common streets and the people in them. * * *

LETTER III.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Paris, May 22, 1739.

AFTER the little particulars aforesaid I should have proceeded to a journal of our transactions for this week past, should have carried you post from hence to Versailles, hurried you through the gardens to Trianon, back again to Paris, so away to Chantilly. But the fatigue is perhaps more than you can bear, and moreover I think I have reason to stomach your last piece of gravity. Supposing

you were in your soberest mood, I am sorry you should think me capable of ever being so dissipé, so evaporé, as not to be in a condition of relishing any thing you could say to me. And now, if you have a mind to make your peace with me, arouse ye from your megrims and your melancholies, and (for exercise is good for you) throw away your night-cap, call for your jack-boots, and set out with me, last Saturday evening, for Versailles—and so at eight o'clock, passing through a road speckled with vines, and villas, and hares, and partridges, we arrive at the great avenue, flanked on either hand with a double row of trees about half a mile long, and with the palace itself to terminate the view; facing which, on each side of you, is placed a semi-circle of very handsome buildings, which form the stables. These we will not enter into, because you know we are no jockeys. Well! and is this the great front of Versailles? What a huge heap of littleness! It is composed, as it were, of three courts, all open to the eye at once, and gradually diminishing till you come to the royal apartments, which on this side present but half a dozen windows and a bálcony. This last is all that can be called a front, for the rest is only great wings. The hue of all this mass is black, dirty red, and yellow; the first proceeding from stone changed by age; the second, from a mixture of brick; and the last, from a profusion of tarnished gilding. You cannot see a more disagreeable tout-ensemble; and, to finish the matter, it is all stuck over in many places with small busts of a tawny hue between every two windows. We pass through this to go into the garden, and here the case is indeed altered; nothing can be vaster and more magnificent than the back front; before it a very spacious terrace spreads itself, adorned with two large basins; these are bordered and lined (as most of the others) with white marble, with handsome statues of bronze reclined on their edges.

From hence you descend a huge flight of steps into a semi-circle formed by woods, that are cut all round into niches, which are filled with beautiful copies of all the famous antique statues in white marble. Just in the midst is the basin of Latona; she and her children are standing on the top of a rock in the middle, on the sides of which are the peasants, some half, some totally changed into frogs, all which throw out water at her in great plenty. From this place runs on the great alley, which brings you into a complete round, where is the basin of Apollo, the biggest in the gardens. He is rising in his car out of the water, surrounded by nymphs and tritons, all in bronze, and finely executed, and these, as they play, raise a perfect storm about him; beyond this is the great canal, a prodigious long piece of water, that terminates the whole: all this you have at one coup d'œil in entering the garden, which is truly great. I cannot say as much of the general taste of the place; every thing you behold savours too much of art; all is forced, all is constrained about you; statues and vases sowed every where without distinction; sugar-loaves and minced-pies of yew; scrawl-work of box, and little squirting jets-d'eau, besides a great sameness in the walks, cannot help striking one at first sight, not to mention the silliest of labyrinths, and all Æsop's fables in water; since these were designed in usum Delphini only. Here then we walk by moonlight, and hear the ladies and the nightingales sing. Next morning, being Whitsunday, make ready to go to the Installation of nine Knights du Saint Esprit; Cambis is one*: high mass celebrated with music, great crowd, much incense, King, Queen, Dauphin, Mesdames, Cardinals, and Court: Knights arrayed by his majesty; reverences before the altar, not bows, but

* The Comte de Cambis was lately returned from his embassy in England.

curtsies; stiff hams; much tittering among the ladies; trumpets, kettle-drums, and fifes. My dear West, I am vastly delighted with Trianon, all of us with Chantilly; if you would know why, you must have patience, for I can hold my pen no longer, except to tell you that I saw Britannicus last night; all the characters, particularly Agrippina and Nero, done to perfection; to-morrow Phædra and Hippolitus. We are making you a little bundle of petites pieces; there is nothing in them, but they are acting at present; there are too Crebillon's Letters, and Amusemens sur le langage des Bêtes, said to be of one Bougeant, a Jesuit; they are both esteemed, and lately come out. This day se'nnight we go to Rheims.

LETTER IV.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Rheims, June 21, N. S. 1739.

WE have now been settled almost three weeks in this city, which is more considerable upon account of its size and antiquity, than from the number of its inhabitants, or any advantages of commerce. There is little in it worth a stranger's curiosity, besides the cathedral church, which is a vast Gothic building of a surprising beauty and lightness, all covered over with a profusion of little statues, and other ornaments. It is here the Kings of France are crowned by the Archbishop of Rheims, who is the first peer, and the primate of the kingdom: the holy vessel made use of on that occasion, which contains the oil, is kept in the church of St. Nicasius hard by, and is believed to have been brought

by an angel from heaven at the coronation of Clovis, the first christian king. The streets in general have but a melancholy aspect, the houses all old; the public walks run along the side of a great moat under the ramparts, where one hears a continual croaking of frogs; the country round about is one great plain covered with vines, which at this time of the year afford no very pleasing prospect, as being not above a foot high. What pleasures the place denies to the sight, it makes up to the palate; since you have nothing to drink but the best champaigne in the world, and all sort of provisions equally good. As to other pleasures, there is not that freedom of conversation among the people of fashion here, that one sees in other parts of France; for though they are not very numerous in this place, and consequently must live a good deal together, yet they never come to any great familiarity with one another. As my Lord Conway had spent a good part of his time among them, his brother, and we with him, were soon introduced into all their assemblies: as soon as you enter, the lady of the house presents each of you a card, and offers you a party at quadrille; you sit down, and play forty deals without intermission, excepting one quarter of an hour, when every body rises to eat of what they call the gouter, which supplies the place of our tea, and is a service of wine, fruits, cream, sweetmeats, crawfish, and cheese. People take what they like, and sit down again to play; after that, they make little parties to go to the walks together, and then all the company retire to their separate habitations. Very seldom any suppers or dinners are given; and this is the manner they live among one another; not so much out of any aversion they have to pleasure, as out of a sort of formality they have contracted by not being much frequented by people who have lived at Paris. It is sure they do not hate gaiety any more than the rest of their country-people,

and can enter into diversions, that are once proposed, with a good grace enough; for instance, the other evening we happened to be got together in a company of eighteen people, men and women of the best fashion here, at a garden in the town to walk; when one of the ladies bethought herself of asking, 'Why should not we sup here?' Immediately the cloth was laid by the side of a fountain under the trees, and a very elegant supper served up; after which another said, 'Come, let us sing;' and directly began herself: from singing we insensibly fell to dancing, and singing in a round; when somebody mentioned the violins, and immediately a company of them was ordered: minuets were begun in the open air, and then came country-dances, which held till four o'clock next morning; at which hour the gayest lady there proposed, that such as were weary should get into their coaches, and the rest of them should dance before them with the music in the van; and in this manner we paraded through all the principal streets of the city, and waked every body in it. Mr. Walpole had a mind to make a custom of the thing, and would have given a ball in the same manner next week, but the women did not come into it; so I believe it will drop, and they will return to their dull cards, and usual formalities. We are not to stay above a month longer here, and shall then go to Dijon, the chief city of Burgundy, a very splendid and a very gay town; at least such is the present design.

LETTER V.

MR. GRAY TO HIS FATHER.

Dijon, Friday, Sept. 11, N. S. 1739.

WE have made three short days' journey of it from Rheims hither, where we arrived the night before last: the road we have passed through has been extremely agreeable: it runs through the most fertile part of Champaigne by the side of the river Marne, with a chain of hills on each hand at some distance, entirely covered with woods and vineyards, and every now and then the ruins of some old castle on their tops; we lay at St. Dizier the first night, and at Langres the second, and got hither the next evening time enough to have a full view of this city in entering it: it lies in a very extensive plain covered with vines and corn, and consequently is plentifully supplied with both. I need not tell you that it is the chief city of Burgundy, nor that it is of great antiquity; considering which, one should imagine it ought to be larger than one finds it. However, what it wants in extent is made up in beauty and cleanliness, and in rich convents and churches, most of which we have seen. The palace of the States is a magnificent new building, where the Duke of Bourbon is lodged when he comes every three years to hold that assembly, as governor of the province. A quarter of a mile out of the town is a famous abbey of Carthusians, which we are just returned from seeing. In their chapel are the tombs of the ancient Dukes of Burgundy, that were so powerful, till at the death of Charles the Bold, the last of them, this part of his dominions was united by Lewis XI. to the crown of France. To-morrow

we are to pay a visit to the abbot of the Cistercians, who lives a few leagues off, and who uses to receive all strangers with great civility; his abbey is one of the richest in the kingdom; he keeps open house always, and lives with great magnificence. We have seen enough of this town already, to make us regret the time we spent at Rheims; it is full of people of condition, who seem to form a much more agreeable society than we found in Champaigne; but as we shall stay here but two or three days longer, it is not worth while to be introduced into their houses. On Monday or Tuesday we are to set out for Lyons, which is two days' journey distant, and from thence you shall hear again from me.

LETTER VI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Lyons, Sept. 18, N. S. 1739.

SCAVEZ vous bien, mon cher ami, que je vous hais, que je vous deteste? voilà des termes un peu fortes; and that will save me, upon a just computation, a page of paper and six drops of ink; which, if I confined myself to reproaches of a more moderate nature, I should be obliged to employ in using you according to your deserts. What! to let any body reside three months at Rheims, and write but once to them? Please to consult Tully de Amicit. page 5, line 25, and you will find it said in express terms, 'Ad amicum inter Remos relegatum mense uno quinquies scriptum esto;' nothing more plain, or less liable to false interpretations. Now because, I suppose, it will give you pain to

know we are in being, I take this opportunity to tell you that we are at the ancient and celebrated Lugdunum, a city situated upon the confluence of the Rhône and Saône (Arar, I should say) two people, who, though of tempers extremely unlike, think fit to join hands here, and make a little party to travel to the Mediterranean in company; the lady comes gliding along through the fruitful plains of Burgundy, incredibili lenitate, ita ut oculis in utram partem fluit judicari non possit; the gentleman runs all rough and roaring down from the mountains of Switzerland to meet her; and with all her soft airs she likes him never the worse; she goes through the middle of the city in state, and he passes incog. without the walls, but waits for her a little below. The houses here are so high, and the streets so narrow, as would be sufficient to render Lyons the dismallest place in the world, but the number of people, and the face of commerce diffused about it, are, at least, as sufficient to make it the liveliest: between these two sufficiencies, you will be in doubt what to think of it; so we shall leave the city, and proceed to its environs, which are beautiful beyond expression; it is surrounded with mountains, and those mountains all bedropped and bespeckled with houses, gardens, and plantations of the rich bourgeois, who have from thence a prospect of the city in the vale below on one hand, on the other the rich plains of the Lyonnois, with the rivers winding among them, and the Alps, with the mountains of Dauphiné, to bound the view. All yesterday morning we were busied in climbing up Mount Fourviere, where the ancient city stood perched at such a height, that nothing but the hopes of gain could certainly ever persuade their neighbours to pay them a visit: here are the ruins of the emperors' palaces, that resided here, that is to say, Augustus and Severus; they consist in nothing but great masses of old wall, that have

only their quality to make them respected. In a vineyard of the Minims are remains of a theatre; the Fathers, whom they belong to, hold them in no esteem at all, and would have showed us their sacristy and chapel instead of them: the Ursuline Nuns have in their garden some Roman baths, but we having the misfortune to be men, and heretics, they did not think proper to admit us. Hard by are eight arches of a most magnificent aqueduct, said to be erected by Antony, when his legions were quartered here: there are many other parts of it dispersed up and down the country, for it brought the water from a river many leagues off in La Forez. Here are remains too of Agrippa's seven great roads which met at Lyons; in some places they lie twelve feet deep in the ground: in short, a thousand matters that you shall not know, till you give me a description of the Païs de Tombridge, and the effect its waters have upon you.

LETTER VII.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

Temple, Sept. 28, 1739.

IF wishes could turn to realities, I would fling down my law books, and sup with you to-night. But, alas! here am I doomed to fix, while you are fluttering from city to city, and enjoying all the pleasures which a gay climate can afford. It is out of the power of my heart to envy your good fortune, yet I cannot help indulging a few natural desires; as for example, to take a walk with you

on the banks of the Rhône, and to be climbing up mount Fourviere;

> Jam mens prætrepidans avet vagari:
> Jam læti studio pedes vigescunt.

However, so long as I am not deprived of your correspondence, so long shall I always find some pleasure in being at home. And, setting all vain curiosity aside, when the fit is over, and my reason begins to come to herself, I have several other powerful motives which might easily cure me of my restless inclinations: amongst these, my mother's ill state of health is not the least; which was the reason of our going to Tunbridge, so that you cannot expect much description or amusement from thence. Nor indeed is there much room for either; for all diversions there may be reduced to two articles, gaming and going to church. They were pleased to publish certain Tunbrigiana this season; but such ana! I believe there were never so many vile little verses put together before. So much for Tunbridge: London affords me as little to say. What! so huge a town as London? Yes, consider only how I live in that town. I never go into the gay world or high world, and consequently receive nothing from thence to brighten my imagination. The busy world I leave to the busy; and am resolved never to talk politics till I can act at the same time. To tell old stories, or prate of old books, seems a little musty; and toujours Chapon bouilli, won't do. However, for want of better fare, take another little mouthful of my poetry.

> O meæ jucunda comes quietis!
> Quæ ferè ægrotum solita es levare
> Pectus, et sensim ah! nimis ingruentes
> Fallere curas:

Quid canes? quanto Lyra dic furore
Gesties, quando hâc reducem sodalem
Glauciam * gaudere simul videbis
Méque sub umbrâ?

LETTER VIII.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Lyons, Oct. 13, N. S. 1739.

IT is now almost five weeks since I left Dijon, one of the gayest and most agreeable little cities of France, for Lyons, its reverse in all these particulars. It is the second in the kingdom in bigness and rank, the streets excessively narrow and nasty; the houses immensely high and large; (that, for instance, where we are lodged, has twenty-five rooms on a floor, and that for five stories) it swarms with inhabitants like Paris itself, but chiefly a mercantile people, too much given up to commerce to think of their own, much less of a stranger's diversions. We have no acquaintance in the town, but such English as happen to be passing through here, in their way to Italy and the South, which at present happen to be near thirty in number. It is a fortnight since we set out from hence upon a little excursion to Geneva. We took the longest road, which lies through Savoy, on purpose to see a famous monastery, called the Grand Chartreuse, and had no reason to think our time lost. After having travelled seven

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* He gives Mr. Gray the name of Glaucias frequently in his Latin verse, as Mr. Gray calls him Favonius.

days very slow (for we did not change horses, it being impossible for a chaise to go post in these roads) we arrived at a little village, among the mountains of Savoy, called Echelles; from thence we proceeded on horses, who are used to the way, to the mountain of the Chartreuse: it is six miles to the top; the road runs winding up it, commonly not six feet broad; on one hand is the rock, with woods of pine-trees hanging over head; on the other, a monstrous precipice, almost perpendicular, at the bottom of which rolls a torrent, that sometimes tumbling among the fragments of stone that have fallen from on high, and sometimes precipitating itself down vast descents with a noise like thunder, which is still made greater by the echo from the mountains on each side, concurs to form one of the most solemn, the most romantic, and the most astonishing scenes I ever beheld: add to this the strange views made by the crags and cliffs on the other hand; the cascades that in many places throw themselves from the very summit down into the vale, and the river below; and many other particulars impossible to describe; you will conclude we had no occasion to repent our pains. This place St. Bruno chose to retire to, and upon its very top founded the aforesaid convent, which is the superior of the whole order. When we came there, the two fathers, who are commissioned to entertain strangers, (for the rest must neither speak one to another, nor to any one else) received us very kindly; and set before us a repast of dried fish, eggs, butter, and fruits, all excellent in their kind, and extremely neat. They pressed us to spend the night there, and to stay some days with them; but this we could not do, so they led us about their house, which is, you must think, like a little city; for there are 100 fathers, besides 300 servants, that make their clothes, grind their corn, press their wine, and do every thing among themselves: the whole is quite

orderly and simple; nothing of finery, but the wonderful decency, and the strange situation, more than supply the place of it. In the evening we descended by the same way, passing through many clouds that were then forming themselves on the mountain's side. Next day we continued our journey by Chamberry, which, though the chief city of the Duchy, and residence of the King of Sardinia, when he comes into this part of his dominions, makes but a very mean and insignificant appearance: we lay at Aix, once famous for its hot baths, and the next night at Annecy; the day after, by noon, we got to Geneva. I have not time to say any thing about it, nor of our solitary journey back again. * * *

LETTER IX.

MR. GRAY TO HIS FATHER.

Lyons, Oct. 25, N. S. 1739.

IN my last I gave you the particulars of our little journey to Geneva: I have only to add, that we stayed about a week, in order to see Mr. Conway settled there: I do not wonder so many English choose it for their residence; the city is very small, neat, prettily built, and extremely populous; the Rhône runs through the middle of it, and it is surrounded with new fortifications, that give it a military compact air; which, joined to the happy, lively countenances of the inhabitants, and an exact discipline always as strictly observed as in time of war, makes the little republic appear a match for a much greater power; though perhaps Geneva, and all that belongs to it, are not of equal extent

with Windsor and its two parks. To one that has passed through Savoy, as we did, nothing can be more striking than the contrast, as soon as he approaches the town. Near the gates of Geneva runs the torrent Arve, which separates it from the King of Sardinia's dominions; on the other side of it lies a country naturally, indeed, fine and fertile; but you meet with nothing in it but meager, ragged, bare-footed peasants, with their children, in extreme misery and nastiness; and even of these no great numbers: you no sooner have crossed the stream I have mentioned, but poverty is no more; not a beggar, hardly a discontented face to be seen; numerous and well-dressed people swarming on the ramparts; drums beating, soldiers, well-clothed and armed, exercising; and folks, with business in their looks, hurrying to and fro; all contribute to make any person, who is not blind, sensible what a difference there is between the two governments, that are the causes of one view and the other. The beautiful lake, at one end of which the town is situated; its extent; the several states that border upon it; and all its pleasures, are too well known for me to mention them. We sailed upon it as far as the dominions of Geneva extend, that is, about two leagues and a half on each side; and landed at several of the little houses of pleasure, that the inhabitants have built all about it, who received us with much politeness. The same night we eat part of a trout, taken in the lake, that weighed thirty-seven pounds; as great a monster as it appeared to us, it was esteemed there nothing extraordinary, and they assured us, it was not uncommon to catch them of fifty pounds; they are dressed here, and sent post to Paris upon some great occasions; nay, even to Madrid, as we were told. The road we returned through was not the same we came by: we crossed the Rhône at Seyssel, and passed for three days among the mountains of Bugey, without meeting

with any thing new: at last we came out into the plains of La Bresse, and so to Lyons again. Sir Robert has written to Mr. Walpole, to desire he would go to Italy; which he has resolved to do; so that all the scheme of spending the winter in the south of France is laid aside, and we are to pass it in a much finer country. You may imagine I am not sorry to have this opportunity of seeing the place in the world that best deserves it: besides as the Pope (who is eighty-eight, and has been lately at the point of death) cannot probably last a great while, perhaps we may have the fortune to be present at the election of a new one, when Rome will be in all its glory. Friday next we certainly begin our journey; in two days we shall come to the foot of the Alps, and six more we shall be in passing them. Even here the winter is begun; what then must it be among those vast snowy mountains where it is hardly ever summer? We are, however, as well armed as possible against the cold, with muffs, hoods, and masks of bever, fur-boots, and bear skins. When we arrive at Turin, we shall rest after the fatigues of the journey. * * *

LETTER X.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Turin, Nov. 7, N. S. 1739.

I AM this night arrived here, and have just set down to rest me after eight days' tiresome journey: for the three first we had the same road we before passed through to go to Geneva; the fourth we

turned out of it, and for that day and the next travelled rather among than upon the Alps; the way commonly running through a deep valley by the side of the river Arc, which works itself a passage, with great difficulty and a mighty noise, among vast quantities of rocks, that have rolled down from the mountain tops. The winter was so far advanced, as in great measure to spoil the beauty of the prospect; however, there was still somewhat fine remaining amidst the savageness and horror of the place: the sixth we began to go up several of these mountains; and as we were passing one, met with an odd accident enough: Mr. Walpole had a little fat black spaniel, that he was very fond of, which he sometimes used to set down, and let it run by the chaise side. We were at that time in a very rough road, not two yards broad at most; on one side was a great wood of pines, and on the other a vast precipice; it was noon-day, and the sun shone bright, when all of a sudden from the wood-side, (which was as steep upwards, as the other part was downwards) out rushed a great wolf, came close to the head of the horses, seized the dog by the throat, and rushed up the hill again with him in his mouth. This was done in less than a quarter of a minute; we all saw it, and yet the servants had not time to draw their pistols, or do any thing to save the dog *. If he had not been there, and the creature had thought fit to lay hold of one of the horses, chaise, and we, and all must inevitably have tumbled above fifty fathoms perpendicular down the precipice. The seventh we came to Lanebourg, the last town in Savoy; it lies at the foot of the

* This odd incident might have afforded Mr. Gray a subject for an ode, which would have been a good companion to that on the death of a favourite cat.

famous mount Cenis, which is so situated as to allow no room for any way but over the very top of it. Here the chaise was forced to be pulled to pieces, and the baggage and that to be carried by mules: we ourselves were wrapped up in our furs, and seated upon a sort of matted chair without legs, which is carried upon poles in the manner of a bier, and so begun to ascend by the help of eight men. It was six miles to the top, where a plain opens itself about as many more in breadth, covered perpetually with very deep snow, and in the midst of that a great lake of unfathomable depth, from whence a river takes its rise, and tumbles over monstrous rocks quite down the other side of the mountain. The descent is six miles more, but infinitely more steep than the going up; and here the men perfectly fly down with you, stepping from stone to stone with incredible swiftness in places where none but they could go three paces without falling. The immensity of the precipices, the roaring of the river and torrents that run into it, the huge crags covered with ice and snow, and the clouds below you and about you, are objects it is impossible to conceive without seeing them; and though we had heard many strange descriptions of the scene, none of them at all came up to it. We were but five hours in performing the whole, from which you may judge of the rapidity of the men's motion. We are now got into Piedmont, and stopped a little while at La Ferriere, a small village about three quarters of the way down, but still among the clouds, where we begun to hear a new language spoken round about us; at last we got quite down, went through the Pas de Suse, a narrow road among the Alps, defended by two fortresses, and lay at Bossolens: next evening through a fine avenue of nine miles in length, as straight as a line, we arrived at this city, which, as you know, is the capital of the Principality,

and the residence of the King of Sardinia.* * * We shall stay here, I believe, a fortnight, and proceed for Genoa, which is three or four days' journey to go post.

I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Turin, Nov. 16, N. S. 1739.

AFTER eight days' journey through Greenland, we arrived at Turin—you approach it by a handsome avenue of nine miles long, and quite straight. —The entrance is guarded by certain vigilant dragons, called Douäniers, who mumbled us for some time. The city is not large, as being a place of strength, and consequently confined within its fortifications; it has many beauties and some faults; among the first are streets all laid out by the line, regular uniform buildings, fine walks that surround the whole, and in general a good, lively, clean appearance: but the houses are of brick, plastered, which is apt to want repairing; the windows of oiled paper, which is apt to be torn; and every thing very slight, which is apt to

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*** That part of the letter here omitted contained only a description of the city; which, as Mr. Gray has given it to Mr. West in the following letter, and that in a more lively manner, I thought it unnecessary to insert; a liberty I have taken in other parts of this correspondence, in order to avoid repetitions.

tumble down. There is an excellent opera, but it is only in the Carnival: balls every night, but only in the Carnival: masquerades too, but only in the Carnival. This Carnival lasts only from Christmas to Lent; one half of the remaining part of the year is passed in remembering the last, the other in expecting the future Carnival. We cannot well subsist upon such slender diet, no more than upon an execrable Italian comedy, and a puppet-show, called Rappresentazione d'un' anima dannata, which, I think, are all the present diversions of the place; except the Marquise de Cavaillac's Conversazione, where one goes to see people play at Ombre and Taroc, a game with 72 cards all painted with suns, and moons, and devils, and monks. Mr. Walpole has been at court; the family are at present at a country palace, called La Venerie. The palace here in town is the very quintessence of gilding and looking-glass; inlaid floors, carved pannels, and painting, wherever they could stick a brush. I own I have not, as yet, any where met with those grand and simple works of Art, that are to amaze one, and whose sight one is to be the better for: but those of Nature have astonished me beyond expression. In our little journey up to the Grande Chartreuse, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no restraining: not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noonday: you have death perpetually before your eyes, only so far removed, as to compose the mind without frighting it. I am well persuaded St. Bruno was a man of no common genius, to choose such a situation for his retirement; and perhaps should have been a disciple of his, had I been born in his time. You may believe Abelard and Heloïse were

not forgot upon this occasion: if I do not mistake, I saw you too every now and then at a distance among the trees; il me semble, que j'ai vu ce chien de visage la quelque part. You seemed to call to me from the other side of the precipice, but the noise of the river below was so great, that I really could not distinguish what you said; it seemed to have a cadence like verse. In your next you will be so good to let me know what it was. The week we have since passed among the Alps has not equalled the single day upon that mountain, because the winter was rather too far advanced, and the weather a little foggy. However, it did not want its beauties; the savage rudeness of the view is inconceivable without seeing it: I reckoned, in one day, thirteen cascades, the least of which was, I dare say, one hundred feet in height. I had Livy in the chaise with me, and beheld his 'Nives cœlo propè immistæ, tecta informia imposita rupibus, pecora jumentaque torrida frigore, homines intonsi et inculti, animalia inanimaque omnia rigentia gelu; omnia confragosa, præruptaque.' The creatures that inhabit them are, in all respects, below humanity; and most of them, especially women, have the tumidum guttur, which they call goscia. Mont Cenis, I confess, carries the permission * mountains have of being frightful rather too far; and its horrors were accompanied with too much danger to give one time to reflect upon their beauties. There is a family of the Alpine monsters I have mentioned, upon its very top, that in the middle of winter calmly lay in their stock of provisions and firing, and so are buried in their hut for a month or two under the snow. When we were down it, and got a little way into Piedmont, we began to find 'Apricos quosdam

* A phrase borrowed from Madame de Sevigné, who quotes a *bon mot* on Pelisson, qu'il abusoit de la permission qu'ont les hommes d'etre laids.

colles, rivosque prope sylvas, et jam humano cultu digniora loca.' I read Silius Italicus too, for the first time; and wished for you, according to custom. We set out for Genoa in two days' time.

LETTER XII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Genoa, Nov. 21, 1739.

HORRIDOS tractus, Boreæq; linquens
Regna Taurini fera, molliorem
Advehor brumam, Genuæq; amantes
Litora soles.

At least if they do not, they have a very ill taste; for I never beheld any thing more amiable: only figure to yourself a vast semicircular basin, full of fine blue sea, and vessels of all sorts and sizes, some sailing out, some coming in, and others at anchor; and all round it palaces and churches peeping over one another's heads, gardens, and marble terraces full of orange and cypress trees, fountains, and trellis-works covered with vines, which altogether compose the grandest of theatres. This is the first coup d'œil, and is almost all I am yet able to give you an account of, for we arrived late last night. To-day was, luckily, a great festival, and in the morning we resorted to the church of the Madonna delle Vigne, to put up our little orisons; (I believe I forgot to tell you, that we have been sometime converts to the holy Catholic church) we found our Lady richly dressed out, with a crown of diamonds on her own head, an-

other upon the child's, and a constellation of wax lights burning before them: shortly after came the Doge, in his robes of crimson damask, and a cap of the same, followed by the Senate in black. Upon his approach began a fine concert of music, and among the rest two eunuchs' voices, that were a perfect feast to ears that had heard nothing but French operas for a year. We listened to this, and breathed nothing but incense for two hours. The Doge is a very tall, lean, stately, old figure, called Costantino Balbi; and the Senate seem to have been made upon the same model. They said their prayers, and heard an absurd white friar preach, with equal devotion. After this we went to the Annonciata, a church built by the family Lomellini, and belonging to it; which is, indeed, a most stately structure, the inside wholly marble of various kinds, except where gold and painting take its place. From hence to the Palazzo Doria. I should make you sick of marble, if I told you how it was lavished here upon the porticoes, the balustrades, and terraces, the lowest of which extends quite to the sea. The inside is by no means answerable to the outward magnificence; the furniture seems to be as old as the founder of the family *. Their great imbossed silver tables tell you, in bas-relief, his victories at sea; how he entertained the Emperor Charles, and how he refused the sovereignty of the Commonwealth when it was offered him; the rest is old-fashioned velvet chairs, and gothic tapestry. The rest of the day has been spent, much to our hearts' content, in cursing French music and architecture, and in singing the praises of Italy. We find this place so very fine, that we are in fear of finding nothing finer. We are fallen in love with the Mediterranean sea, and hold your lakes and your rivers in vast contempt. This is

* The famous Andrea Doria.

'The happy country where huge lemons grow,'

as Waller says; and I am sorry to think of leaving it in a week for Parma, although it be

The happy country where huge cheeses grow.

LETTER XIII.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Bologna, Dec. 9, N. S. 1739.

OUR journey hither has taken up much less time than I expected. We left Genoa (a charming place, and one that deserved a longer stay) the week before last; crossed the mountains, and lay that night at Tortona, the next at St. Giovanni, and the morning after came to Piacenza. That city (though the capital of a Duchy) made so frippery an appearance, that instead of spending some days there, as had been intended, we only dined, and went on to Parma; stayed there all the following day, which was passed in visiting the famous works of Corregio in the Dome, and other churches. The fine gallery of pictures, that once belonged to the Dukes of Parma, is no more here; the King of Naples has carried it all thither, and the city had not merit enough to detain us any longer, so we proceeded through Reggio to Modena; this, though the residence of its Duke, is an ill-built melancholy place, all of brick, as are most of the towns in this part of Lombardy: he himself lives in a private manner, with very little appearance of a court about him; he has one of the noblest collections of paintings in the world, which entertained us extremely well the rest of

that day and a part of the next; and in the afternoon we came to Bologna: so now you may wish us joy of being in the dominions of his Holiness. This is a populous city, and of great extent: all the streets have porticoes on both sides, such as surround a part of Covent-Garden, a great relief in summer-time in such a climate; and from one of the principal gates to a church of the Virgin [where is a wonder-working picture, at three miles distance] runs a corridore of the same sort, lately finished, and, indeed, a most extraordinary performance. The churches here are more remarkable for their paintings than architecture, being mostly old structures of brick; but the palaces are numerous, and fine enough to supply us with somewhat worth seeing from morning till night. The country of Lombardy, hitherto, is one of the most beautiful imaginable; the roads broad, and exactly straight, and on either hand vast plantations of trees, chiefly mulberries and olives, and not a tree without a vine twining about it and spreading among its branches. This scene, indeed, which must be the most lovely in the world during the proper season, is at present all deformed by the winter, which here is rigorous enough for the time it lasts; but one still sees the skeleton of a charming place, and reaps the benefit of its product, for the fruits and provisions are admirable; in short, you find every thing, that luxury can desire, in perfection. We have now been here a week, and shall stay some little time longer. We are at the foot of the Apennine mountains; it will take up three days to cross them, and then we shall come to Florence, where we shall pass the Christmas. Till then we must remain in a state of ignorance as to what is doing in England, for our letters are to meet us there: if I do not find four or five from you alone, I shall wonder.

LETTER XIV.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, Dec. 19, N. S. 1739.

WE spent twelve days at Bologna, chiefly (as most travellers do) in seeing sights; for as we knew no mortal there, and as it is no easy matter to get admission into any Italian house, without very particular recommendations, we could see no company but in public places; and there are none in that city but the churches. We saw, therefore, churches, palaces, and pictures from morning to night; and the 15th of this month set out for Florence, and began to cross the Apennine mountains; we travelled among and upon them all that day, and, as it was but indifferent weather, were commonly in the middle of thick clouds, that utterly deprived us of a sight of their beauties: for this vast chain of hills has its beauties, and all the valleys are cultivated; even the mountains themselves are many of them so within a little of their very tops. They are not so horrid as the Alps, though pretty near as high; and the whole road is admirably well kept, and paved throughout, which is a length of fourscore miles, and more. We left the Pope's dominions, and lay that night in those of the Grand Duke of Fiorenzuola, a paltry little town, at the foot of Mount Giogo, which is the highest of them all. Next morning we went up it; the post-house is upon its very top, and usually involved in clouds, or half-buried in the snow. Indeed there was none of the last at the time we were there, but it was still a dismal

habitation. The descent is most excessively steep, and the turnings very short and frequent; however, we performed it without any danger, and in coming down could dimly discover Florence, and the beautiful plain about it, through the mists; but enough to convince us, it must be one of the noblest prospects upon earth in summer. That afternoon we got thither; and Mr. Mann*, the resident, had sent his servant to meet us at the gates, and conduct us to his house. He is the best and most obliging person in the world. The next night we were introduced at the Prince of Craon's assembly (he has the chief power here in the Grand Duke's absence). The Princess, and he, were extremely civil to the name of Walpole, so we were asked to stay supper, which is as much as to say, you may come and sup here whenever you please; for after the first invitation this is always understood. We have also been at the Countess Suarez's, a favourite of the late Duke, and one that gives the first movement to every thing gay that is going forward here. The news is every day expected from Vienna of the Great Duchess's delivery; if it be a boy, here will be all sorts of balls, masquerades, operas, and illuminations; if not, we must wait for the Carnival, when all those things come of course. In the mean time it is impossible to want entertainment; the famous gallery, alone, is an amusement for months; we commonly pass two or three hours every morning in it, and one has perfect leisure to consider all its beauties. You know it contains many hundred antique statues, such as the whole world cannot match, besides the vast collection of paintings, medals, and precious stones, such as no other prince was ever master of; in short, all that

* Now Sir Horace Mann, and Envoy Extraordinary at the same court.

the rich and powerful house of Medicis has in so many years got together *. And besides this city abounds with so many palaces and churches, that you can hardly place yourself any where without having some fine one in view, or at least some statue or fountain, magnificently adorned; these undoubtedly are far more numerous than Genoa can pretend to; yet, in its general appearance, I cannot think that Florence equals it in beauty. Mr. Walpole is just come from being presented to the Electress Palatine Dowager; she is a sister of the late Great Duke's; a stately old lady, that never goes out but to church, and then she has guards, and eight horses to her coach. She received him with much ceremony, standing under a huge black canopy, and, after a few minutes talking, she assured him of her good will, and dismissed him: she never sees any body but thus in form; and so she passes her life, † poor woman! * * *

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* He catalogued and made occasional short remarks on the pictures, &c. which he saw here, as well as at other places, many of which are in my possession, but it would have swelled this work too much if I had inserted them.

† Persons of very high rank, and withal very good sense, will only feel the pathos of this exclamation.

LETTER XV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Florence, Jan. 15, 1740.

I THINK I have not yet told you how we left that charming place Genoa: how we crossed a mountain all of green marble, called Buchetto: how we came to Tortona, and waded through the mud to come to Castel St. Giovanni, and there eat mustard and sugar with a dish of crows' gizzards: secondly, how we passed the famous plains

Quà Trebie glaucas salices intersecat undâ,
Arvaque Romanis nobilitata malis.
Visus adhuc amnis veteri de clade rubere,
Et suspirantes ducere mœstus aquas;
Maurorumque ala, et nigræ increbrescere turmæ,
Et pulsa Ausonidum ripa sonare fugâ.

Nor, thirdly, how we passed through Piacenza, Parma, Modena, entered the territories of the Pope; stayed twelve days at Bologna; crossed the Apennines, and afterwards arrived at Florence. None of these things have I told you, nor do I intend to tell you, till you ask me some questions concerning them. No not even of Florence itself, except that it is as fine as possible, and has every thing in it that can bless the eyes. But, before I enter into particulars, you must make your peace both with me and the Venus de Medicis, who, let me tell you, is highly and justly offended at you for not inquiring, long before this, concerning her symmetry and proportions. * * *

LETTER XVI.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

ELEGIA.*

ERGO desidiæ videor tibi crimine dignus;
Et meritò: victas do tibi sponte manus.
Arguor et veteres nimium contemnere Musas,
Irata et nobis est Medicæa Venus.
Mene igitur statuas et inania saxa vereri!
Stultule! marmoreâ quid mihi cum Venere?
Hìc veræ, hìc vivæ Veneres, et mille per urbem,
Quarum nulla queat non placuisse Jovi.
Cedite Romanæ formosæ et cedite Graiæ,
Sintque oblita Helenæ nomen et Hermionæ!
Et, quascunque refert ætas vetus, Heroinæ:
Unus honor nostris jam venit Angliasin.
Oh quales vultus, Oh quantum numen ocellis!
I nunc et Tuscas improbe confer opes.
Ne tamen hæc obtusa nimis præcordia credas,
Neu me adeo nullâ Pallade progenitum:
Testor Pieridumque umbras et flumina Pindi
Me quoque Calliopes semper amasse choros;
Et dudum Ausonias urbes, et visere Graias
Cura est, ingenio si licet ire meo:
Sive est Phidiacum marmor, seu, Mentoris æra,
Seu paries Coo nobilis e calamo;
Nec minus artificum magna argumenta recentûm
Romanique decus nominis et Veneti:
Quà Furor et Mavors et sævo in Marmore vultus,
Quaque et formoso mollior ære Venus.

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* The letter which accompanied this little elegy is not extant. Probably it was only inclosed in one to Mr. Walpole.

Quàque lòquax spirat fucus, vivique labores,
Et quicquid calamo dulciùs ausa manus:
Hìc nemora, et solâ mœrens Melibœus in umbrâ,
Lymphaque muscoso prosiliens lapide;
Illìc majus opus, faciesque in pariete major
Exurgens, Divûm et numina Cœlicolûm;
O vos fælices, quibus hæc cognoscere fas est,
Et totâ Italiâ, qua patet usque, frui!
Nulla dies vobis eat injucunda, nec usquam
Norîtis quid sit tempora amara pati.

LETTER XVII.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, March 19, 1740.

THE Pope* is at last dead, and we are to set out for Rome on Monday next. The Conclave is still sitting there, and likely to continue so some time longer, as the two French Cardinals are but just arrived, and the German ones are still expected. It agrees mighty ill with those that remain inclosed: Ottoboni is already dead of an apoplexy; Altieri and several others are said to be dying, or very bad: yet it is not expected to break up till after Easter. We shall lie at Sienna the first night, spend a day there, and in two more get to Rome. One begins to see in this country the first promises of an Italian spring, clear unclouded skies, and warm suns, such as are not often felt in England; yet, for your sake, I hope at present you have your proportion of them, and that all your frosts, and snows, and short-breaths are, by this time,

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* Clement the Twelfth.

utterly vanished. I have nothing new or particular to inform you of; and, if you see things at home go on much in their old course, you must not imagine them more various abroad. The diversions of a Florentine Lent are composed of a sermon in the morning, full of hell and the devil; a dinner at noon, full of fish and meager diet; and, in the evening, what is called a Conversazione, a sort of assembly at the principal people's houses, full of I cannot tell what: besides this, there is twice a week a very grand concert. * * *

LETTER XVIII.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Rome, April 2, N. S. 1740.

THIS is the third day since we came to Rome, but the first hour I have had to write to you in. The journey from Florence cost us four days, one of which was spent at Sienna, an agreeable, clean, old city, of no great magnificence or extent; but in a fine situation, and good air. What it has most considerable is its cathedral, a huge pile of marble, black and white laid alternately, and laboured with a gothic niceness and delicacy in the old-fashioned way. Within too are some paintings and sculpture of considerable hands. The sight of this, and some collections that were showed us in private houses, were a sufficient employment for the little time we were to pass there; and the next morning we set forward on our journey through a country very oddly composed; for some miles you have a continual scene of little mountains cultivated from top to bottom with rows of olive-trees,

or else elms, each of which has its vine twining about it, and mixing with the branches; and corn sown between all the ranks. This, diversified with numerous small houses and convents, makes the most agreeable prospect in the world: but, all of a sudden, it alters to black barren hills, as far as the eye can reach, that seem never to have been capable of culture, and are as ugly as useless. Such is the country for some time before one comes to Mount Radicofani, a terrible black hill, on the top of which we were to lodge that night. It is very high, and difficult of ascent; and at the foot of it we were much embarrassed by the fall of one of the poor horses that drew us. This accident obliged another chaise, which was coming down, to stop also; and out of it peeped a figure in a red cloak, with a handkerchief tied round its head, which, by its voice and mien, seemed a fat old woman; but, upon its getting out, appeared to be Senesino, who was returning from Naples to Sienna, the place of his birth and residence. On the highest part of the mountain is an old fortress, and near it a house built by one of the Grand Dukes for a hunting-seat, but now converted into an inn: it is the shell of a large fabric, but such an inside, such chambers, and accommodations, that your cellar is a palace in comparison; and your cat sups and lies much better than we did; for, it being a saint's eve, there was nothing but eggs. We devoured our meager fare; and, after stopping up the windows with the quilts, were obliged to lie upon the straw beds in our clothes. Such are the conveniences in a road, that is, as it were, the great thoroughfare of all the world. Just on the other side of this mountain, at Ponte-Centino, one enters the patrimony of the church; a most delicious country, but thinly inhabited. That night brought us to Viterbo, a city of a more lively appearance than any we had lately met with; the houses have glass windows, which is not very

usual here; and most of the streets are terminated by a handsome fountain. Here we had the pleasure of breaking our fast on the leg of an old hare and some broiled crows. Next morning, in descending Mount Viterbo, we first discovered (though at near thirty miles distance) the cupola of St. Peter's, and a little after began to enter on an old Roman pavement, with now and then a ruined tower, or a sepulchre on each hand. We now had a clear view of the city, though not to the best advantage, as coming along a plain quite upon a level with it; however, it appeared very vast, and surrounded with magnificent villas and gardens. We sōon after crossed the Tiber, a river that ancient Rome made more considerable than any merit of its own could have done: however, it is not contemptibly small, but a good handsome stream; very deep, yet somewhat of a muddy complexion. The first entrance of Rome is prodigiously striking. It is by a noble gate, designed by Michel Angelo, and adorned with statues; this brings you into a large square, in the midst of which is a vast obelisk of granite, and in front you have at one view two churches of a handsome architecture, and so much alike that they are called the twins; with three streets, the middlemost of which is one of the longest in Rome. As high as my expectation was raised, I confess, the magnificence of this city infinitely surpasses it. You cannot pass along a street but you have views of some palace, or church, or square, or fountain, the most picturesque and noble one can imagine. We have not yet set about considering its beauties, ancient and modern, with attention; but have already taken a slight transient view of some of the most remarkable. St. Peter's I saw the day after we arrived, and was struck dumb with wonder. I there saw the Cardinal d'Auvergne, one of the French ones, who, upon coming off his journey, immediately repaired hither to offer up his vows at the high

altar, and went directly into the Conclave; the doors of which we saw opened to him, and all the other immured cardinals came thither to receive him. Upon his entrance they were closed again directly. It is supposed they will not come to an agreement about a pope till after Easter, though the confinement is very disagreeable. I have hardly philosophy enough to see the infinity of fine things, that are here daily in the power of any body that has money, without regretting the want of it; but custom has the power of making things easy to one. I have not yet seen his majesty of Great-Britain, &c. though I have the two boys in the gardens of the Villa Borgese, where they go a-shooting almost every day; it was at a distance, indeed, for we did not choose to meet them, as you may imagine. This letter (like all those the English send, or receive) will pass through the hands of that family, before it comes to those it was intended for. They do it more honour than it deserves; and all they will learn from thence will be, that I desire you to give my duty to my father, and wherever else it is due, and that I am, &c.

LETTER XIX.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Rome, April 15, 1740. Good-Friday.

TO-DAY I am just come from paying my adoration at St. Peter's to three extraordinary relics, which are exposed to public view only on these two days in the whole year, at which time all the confraternities in the city come in procession to see them. It was something extremely novel to see that vast

church, and the most magnificent in the world, undoubtedly, illuminated (for it was night) by thousands of little crystal lamps, disposed in the figure of a huge cross at the high altar, and seeming to hang alone in the air. All the light proceeded from this, and had the most singular effect imaginable as one entered the great door. Soon after came one after another, I believe, thirty processions, all dressed in linen frocks, and girt with a cord, their heads covered with a cowl all over, only two holes to see through left. Some of them were all black, others red, others white, others party-coloured; these were continually coming and going with their tapers and crucifixes before them; and to each company, as they arrived and knelt before the great altar, were shown from a balcony, at a great height, the three wonders, which are, you must know, the head of the spear that wounded Christ; St. Veronica's handkerchief, with the miraculous impression of his face upon it; and a piece of the true cross, on the sight of which the people thump their breasts, and kiss the pavement with vast devotion. The tragical part of the ceremony is half a dozen wretched creatures, who, with their faces covered, but naked to the waist, are in a side-chapel disciplining themselves with scourges full of iron prickles; but really in earnest, as our eyes can testify, which saw their backs and arms so raw, we should have taken it for a red satin doublet torn, and showing the skin through, had we not been convinced of the contrary by the blood which was plentifully sprinkled about them. It is late; I give you joy of Porto-Bello, and many other things, which I hope are all true. * * *

LETTER XX.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Tivoli, May 20, 1740.

THIS day being in the palace of his Highness the Duke of Modena, he laid his most serene commands upon me to write to Mr. West, and said he thought it for his glory, that I should draw up an inventory of all his most serene possessions for the said West's perusal.——Imprimis, a house, being in circumference a quarter of a mile, two feet and an inch; the said house containing the following particulars, to wit, a great room; item, another great room; item, a bigger room; item, another room; item, a vast room; item, a sixth of the same; a seventh ditto; an eighth as before; a ninth as abovesaid; a tenth (see No. 1.); item, ten more such, besides twenty besides, which, not to be too particular, we shall pass over. The said rooms contain nine chairs, two tables, five stools, and a cricket. From whence we shall proceed to the garden, containing two millions of superfine laurel hedges, a clump of cypress trees, and half the river Teverone, that pisses into two thousand several chamberpots. Finis.—Dame Nature desired me to put in a list of her little goods and chattels, and, as they were small, to be very minute about them. She has built here three or four little mountains, and laid them out in an irregular semicircle; from certain others behind, at a greater distance, she has drawn a canal, into which she has put a little river of hers, called Anio; she has cut a huge clift between the two innermost of her four hills, and there she has left it to its own

disposal; which she has no sooner done, but, like a heedless chit, it tumbles headlong down a declivity fifty feet perpendicular, breaks itself all to shatters, and is converted into a shower of rain, where the sun forms many a bow, red, green, blue, and yellow. To get out of our metaphors without any further trouble, it is the most noble sight in the world. The weight of that quantity of waters, and the force they fall with, have worn the rocks they throw themselves among into a thousand irregular crags, and to a vast depth. In this channel it goes boiling along with a mighty noise till it comes to another steep, where you see it a second time come roaring down (but first you must walk two miles farther) a greater height than before, but not with that quantity of waters; for by this time it has divided itself, being crossed and opposed by the rocks, into four several streams, each of which, in emulation of the great one, will tumble down too; and it does tumble down, but not from an equally elevated place; so that you have at one view all these cascades intermixed with groves of olive and little woods, the mountains rising behind them, and on the top of one (that which forms the extremity of one of the half-circle's horns) is seated the town itself. At the very extremity of that extremity, on the brink of the precipice, stands the Sibyls' temple, the remains of a little rotunda, surrounded with its portico, above half of whose beautiful Corinthian pillars are still standing and entire; all this on one hand. On the other, the open Campagna of Rome, here and there a little castle on a hillock, and the city itself on the very brink of the horizon, indistinctly seen (being 18 miles off) except the dome of St. Peter's; which, if you look out of your window, wherever you are, I suppose, you can see. I did not tell you that a little below the first fall, on the side of the rock, and hanging over that torrent, are little ruins which they show you

for Horace's house, a curious situation to observe the

> 'Præceps Anio, et Tiburni lucus, et uda
> Mobilibus pomaria rivis.'

Mæcenas did not care for such a noise, it seems, and built him a house (which they also carry one to see) so situated that it sees nothing at all of the matter, and for any thing he knew there might be no such river in the world. Horace had another house on the other side of the Teverone, opposite to Mæcenas's; and they told us there was a bridge of communication, by which 'andava il detto Signor per trastullarsi coll istesso Orazio.' In coming hither we crossed the Aquæ Albulæ, a vile little brook that stinks like a fury, and they say it has stunk so these thousand years. I forgot the Piscina of Quintilius Varus, where he used to keep certain little fishes. This is very entire, and there is a piece of the aqueduct that supplied it too; in the garden below is old Rome, built in little, just as it was, they say. There are seven temples in it, and no houses at all: they say there were none.

May 21.

We have had the pleasure of going twelve miles out of our way to Palestrina. It has rained all day as if heaven and us were coming together. See my honesty, I do not mention a syllable of the temple of Fortune, because I really did not see it; which, I think, is pretty well for an old traveller. So we returned along the Via Prænestina, saw the Lacus Gabinus and Regillus, where, you know, Castor and Pollux appeared upon a certain occasion: and many a good old tomb we left on each hand, and many an aqueduct,

Dumb are whose fountains, and their channels dry.

There are, indeed, two whole modern ones, works

of popes, that run about thirty miles a-piece in length; one of them conveys still the famous Aqua Virgo to Rome, and adds vast beauty to the prospect. So we came to Rome again, where waited for us a splendidissimo regalo of letters; in one of which came You, with your huge characters and wide intervals, staring. I would have you to know, I expect you should take a handsome crow-quill when you write to me, and not leave room for a pin's point in four sides of a sheet royal. Do you but find matter, I will find spectacles.

I have more time than I thought, and I will employ it in telling you about a ball that we were at the other evening. Figure to yourself a Roman villa; all its little apartments thrown open, and lighted up to the best advantage. At the upper end of the gallery, a fine concert, in which La Diamantina, a famous virtuosa, played on the violin divinely, and sung angelically; Giovannino and Pasqualini (great names in musical story) also performed miraculously. On each side were ranged all the secular grand monde of Rome, the ambassadors, princesses, and all that. Among the rest, Il Serenissimo Pretendente (as the Mantova gazette calls him) displayed his rueful length of person, with his two young ones, and all his ministry around him. 'Poi nacque un grazioso ballo,' where the world danced, and I sat in a corner regaling myself with iced fruits, and other pleasant rinfrescatives.

LETTER XXI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Rome, May, 1740.

Mater rosarum, cui teneræ vigent
Auræ Favonî, cui Venus it comes
  Lasciva, Nympharum choreis
    Et volucrum celebrata cantu !
Dic, non inertem fallere qua diem
Amat sub umbrâ, seu sinit aureum
  Dormire plectrum, seu retentat
    Pierio * Zephyrinus antro
Furore dulci plenus, et immemor
Reptantis inter frigora Tusculi
  Umbrosa, vel colles Amici
    Palladiæ superantis Albæ.
Dilecta Fauno, et capripedum choris,
Pineta, testor vos, Anio minax
  Quæcunque per clivos volutus
    Præcipiti tremefecit amne,
Illius altum Tibur, et Æsulæ
Audîsse sylvas nomen amabiles,
  Illius et gratas Latinis
    Naiasin ingeminâsse rupes:
Nam me Latinæ Naiades uvidâ
Vidére ripâ, qua niveas levi
  Tam sæpe lavit rore plumas
    Dulce canens Venusinus ales;

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* He entitled this charming ode, 'Ad C. Favonium Zephyrinum,' and writ it immediately after his journey to Frescati and the cascades of Tivoli, which he describes in the preceding letter.

Mirum! canenti conticuit nemus,
Sacrique fontes, et retinent adhuc
(Sic Musa jussit) saxa molles
Docta modos, veteresque lauri.
Mirare nec tu me citharæ rudem
Claudis laborantem numeris: loca
Amœna, jucundumque ver in-
compositum docuêre carmen;
Hærent sub omni nam folio nigri
Phœbea luci (credite) somnia,
Argutiusque et lympha et auræ
Nescio quid solito loquuntur.

I am to-day just returned from Alba, a good deal fatigued; for you know the Appian is somewhat tiresome*. We dined at Pompey's; he indeed was gone for a few days to his Tusculan, but, by the care of his Villicus, we made an admirable meal. We had the dugs of a pregnant sow, a peacock, a dish of thrushes, a noble scarus, just fresh from the Tyrrhene, and some conchylia of the lake with garum sauce: for my part I never eat better at Lucullus's table. We drank half a dozen cyathi a-piece of ancient Alban to Pholoë's health; and, after bathing, and playing an hour at ball, we mounted our essedum again, and proceeded up the mount to the temple. The priests there entertained us with an account of a wonderful shower of birds' eggs, that had fallen two days before, which had no sooner touched the ground, but they were con-

* However whimsical this humour may appear to some readers, I chose to insert it, as it gives me an opportunity of remarking that Mr. Gray was extremely skilled in the customs of the ancient Romans; and has catalogued, in his common-place book, their various eatables, wines, perfumes, clothes, medicines, &c. with great precision, referring under every article to passages in the poets and historians where their names are mentioned.

verted into gudgeons; as also that the night past a dreadful voice had been heard out of the Adytum, which spoke Greek during a full half hour, but nobody understood it. But quitting my Romanities, to your great joy and mine, let me tell you, in plain English, that we come from Albano. The present town lies within the enclosure of Pompey's Villa in ruins. The Appian Way runs through it, by the side of which, a little farther, is a large old tomb, with five pyramids upon it, which the learned suppose to be the burying-place of the family, because they do not know whose it can be else. But the vulgar assure you it is the sepulchre of the Curiatii, and by that name (such is their power) it goes. One drives to Castel Gondolfo, a house of the Pope's, situated on the top of one of the Collinette, that forms a brim to the basin, commonly called the Alban Lake. It is seven miles round; and directly opposite to you, on the other side, rises the Mons Albanus, much taller than the rest, along whose side are still discoverable (not to common eyes) certain little ruins of the old Alba Longa. They had need be very little, as having been nothing but ruins ever since the days of Tullus Hostilius. On its top is a house of the Constable Colonna's, where stood the temple of Jupiter Latialis. At the foot of the hill Gondolfo are the famous outlets of the lake, built with hewn stone, a mile and a half under ground. Livy, you know, amply informs us of the foolish occasion of this expense, and gives me this opportunity of displaying all my erudition, that I may appear considerable in your eyes. This is the prospect from one window of the palace. From another you have the whole Campagna, the city, Antium, and the Tyrrhene sea (twelve miles distant) so distinguishable, that you may see the vessels sailing upon it. All this is charming. Mr. Walpole says, our memory sees more than our eyes in this country: Which is extremely true; since, for realities,

Windsor, or Richmond Hill, is infinitely preferable to Albano or Frescati. I am now at home, and going to the window to tell you it is the most beautiful of Italian nights, which, in truth, are but just begun (so backward has the spring been here, and every where else, they say). There is a moon! there are stars for you! Do not you hear the fountain? Do not you smell the orange flowers? That building yonder is the convent of S. Isidore; and that eminence, with the cypress trees and pines upon it, the top of M. Quirinal. This is all true, and yet my prospect is not two hundred yards in length. We send you some Roman inscriptions to entertain you. The first two are modern, transcribed from the Vatican library by Mr. Walpole.

Pontifices olim quem fundavêre priores,
Præcipuâ Sixtus perficit arte tholum*;
Et Sixti tantum se gloria tollit in altum,
Quantum se Sixti nobile tollit opus:
Magnus honos magni fundamina ponere templi,
Sed finem cœptis ponere major honos.

Saxa agit Amphion, Thebana ut mœnia condat:
Sixtus et immensæ pondera molis agit†.
Saxa trahunt ambo longe diversa: sed arte
Hæc trahit Amphion; Sixtus et arte trahit.
At tantum exsuperat Dircæum Amphiona Sixtus,
Quantum hic exsuperat cætera saxa lapis.

Mine is ancient, and I think not less curious. It is exactly transcribed from a sepulchral marble at the villa Giustiniani. I put stops to it, when I understand it.

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* Sixtus V. built the dome of St. Peter's.
† He raised the obelisk in the great area.

DIs Manibus
Claudiae, Pistes
Primus Conjugi
Optumae, Sanctae,
Et Piae, Benemeritate.

Non æquos, Parcae, statuistis stamina vitae.
Tam bene compositos potuistis sede tenere.
Amissa est conjux. cur ego et ipse moror?
Si · bella · esse · mî · iste · mea · vivere · debuit ·
Tristia contigerunt qui amissâ conjuge vivo.
Nil est tam miserum, quam totam perdere vitam.
Nec vita enasci dura peregistis crudelia pensa, sorores,
Ruptaque deficiunt in primo munere fusi.
O nimis injustæ ter denos dare munus in annos,
Deceptus · grautus · fatum · sic · pressit · egestas ·
Dum vitam tulero, Primus Pistes lugea conjugium.

LETTER XXII.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Naples, June 17, 1740.

OUR journey hither was through the most beautiful part of the finest country in the world; and every spot of it, on some account or other, famous for these three thousand years past *. The season has

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* Mr. Gray wrote a minute description of every thing he saw in this tour from Rome to Naples; as also of the environs of Rome, Florence, &c. But as these papers are apparently only memorandums for his own use, I do not think it necessary to print them, although they abound with many uncommon remarks, and pertinent classical quota-

hitherto been just as warm as one would wish it; no unwholesome airs, or violent heats, yet heard of: the people call it a backward year, and are in pain about their corn, wine, and oil; but we, who are neither corn, wine, nor oil, find it very agreeable. Our road was through Velletri, Cisterna, Terracina, Capua, and Aversa, and so to Naples. The minute one leaves his Holiness's dominions, the face of things begins to change from wide uncultivated plains to olive groves and well-tilled fields of corn, intermixed with ranks of elms, every one of which has its vine twining about it, and hanging in festoons between the rows from one tree to another. The great old fig-trees, the oranges in full bloom, and myrtles in every hedge, make one of the delightfullest scenes you can conceive; besides that, the roads are wide, well-kept, and full of passengers, a sight I have not beheld this long time. My wonder still increased upon entering the city, which, I think, for number of people, outdoes both Paris and London. The streets are one continued market, and thronged with populace so much that a coach can hardly pass. The common sort are a jolly lively kind of animals, more industrious than Italians usually are; they work till evening; then take their lute or guitar (for they all play) and walk about the city, or upon the seashore with it, to enjoy the fresco. One sees their little brown children jumping about stark-naked, and the bigger ones dancing with castanets, while others play on the cymbal to them. Your maps will show you the situation of Naples; it is on the most lovely bay in the world, and one of the calmest seas: it has many other beauties besides those of nature. We have spent two days in visit-

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tions. The reader will please to observe throughout this section, that it is not my intention to give Mr. Gray's travels, but only extracts from the letters which he writ during his travels.

ing the remarkable places in the country round it, such as the bay of Baiæ, and its remains of antiquity; the lake Avernus, and the Solfatara, Charon's grotto, &c. We have been in the Sibyls' cave and many other strange holes under-ground (I only name them, because you may consult Sandys's Travels); but the strangest hole I ever was in has been to-day, at a place called Portici, where his Sicilian Majesty has a country-seat. About a year ago, as they were digging, they discovered some parts of ancient buildings above thirty feet deep in the ground: curiosity led them on, and they have been digging ever since; the passage they have made, with all its turnings and windings, is now more than a mile long. As you walk, you see parts of an amphitheatre, many houses adorned with marble columns, and encrusted with the same; the front of a temple, and several arched vaults of rooms painted in fresco. Some pieces of painting have been taken out from hence, finer than any thing of the kind before discovered, and with these the king has adorned his palace; also a number of statues, medals, and gems; and more are dug out every day. This is known to be a Roman town *, that in the Emperor Titus's time was overwhelmed by a furious eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which is hard by. The wood and beams remain so perfect that you may see the grain; but burnt to a coal, and dropping into dust upon the least touch. We were to-day at the foot of that mountain, which at present only smokes a little, where we saw the materials that fed the stream of fire, which about four years since ran down its side. We have but a few days longer to stay here; too little in conscience for such a place. * * *

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* It should seem, by the omission of its name, that it was not then discovered to be Herculaneum.

LETTER XXIII.

MR. GRAY TO HIS FATHER.

Florence, July 16, 1740.

AT my return to this city, the day before yesterday, I had the pleasure of finding yours dated June the 9th. The period of our voyages, at least towards the South, is come, as you wish. We have been at Naples, spent nine or ten days there, and returned to Rome, where finding no likelihood of a pope yet these three months, and quite wearied with the formal assemblies, and little society of that great city, Mr. Walpole determined to return hither to spend the summer, where he imagines he shall pass his time more agreeably than in the tedious expectation of what, when it happens, will only be a great show. For my own part, I give up the thoughts of all that with but little regret; but the city itself I do not part with so easily, which alone has amusements for whole years. However, I have passed through all that most people do, both ancient and modern; what that is you may see, better than I can tell you, in a thousand books. The Conclave we left in greater uncertainty than ever; the more than ordinary liberty they enjoy there, and the unusual coolness of the season, makes the confinement less disagreeable to them than common, and, consequently, maintains them in their irresolution. There have been very high words, one or two (it is said) have come even to blows; two more are dead within this last month, Cenci and Portia; the latter died distracted; and we left another (Altieri) at the extremity: yet nobody dreams of an election till the latter end of September. All this gives great scandal

to all good Catholics, and every body talks very freely on the subject. The Pretender (whom you desire an account of) I have had frequent opportunities of seeing at church, at the corso, and other places; but more particularly, and that for a whole night, at a great ball given by Count Patrizii to the Prince and Princess Craon, (who were come to Rome at that time, that he might receive from the hands of the Emperor's minister there the order of the golden fleece) at which he and his two sons were present. They are good fine boys, especially the younger, who has the more spirit of the two, and both danced incessantly all night long. For him, he is a thin ill-made man, extremely tall and awkward, of a most unpromising countenance, a good deal resembling King James the Second, and has extremely the air and look of an idiot, particularly when he laughs or prays. The first he does not often, the latter continually. He lives private enough with his little court about him, consisting of Lord Dunbar, who manages every thing, and two or three of the Preston Scotch lords, who would be very glad to make their peace at home.

We happened to be at Naples on Corpus Christi Day, the greatest feast in the year, so had an opportunity of seeing their Sicilian Majesties to advantage. The King walked in the grand procession, and the Queen (being big with child) sat in a balcony. He followed the Host to the church of St. Clara, where high mass was celebrated to a glorious concert of music. They are as ugly a little pair as one can see: she a pale girl, marked with the small-pox; and he a brown boy with a thin face, a huge nose, and as ungain as possible.

We are settled here with Mr. Mann, in a charming apartment; the river Arno runs under our windows, which we can fish out of. The sky is so serene, and the air so temperate, that one continues in the open air all night long in a slight

nightgown without any danger; and the marble bridge is the resort of every body, where they hear music, eat iced fruits, and sup by moon-light; though as yet (the season being extremely backward every where) these amusements are not begun. You see we are now coming northward again, though in no great haste; the Venetian and Milanese territories, and either Germany or the South of France (according to the turn the war may take), are all that remain for us, that we have not yet seen: as to Loretto, and that part of Italy, we have given over all thoughts of it.

LETTER XXIV.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

Bond-street, June 5, 1740.

I LIVED at the Temple till I was sick of it: I have just left it, and find myself as much a lawyer as I was when I was in it. It is certain, at least, I may study the law here as well as I could there. My being in chambers did not signify to me a pinch of snuff. They tell me my father was a lawyer, and, as you know, eminent in the profession; and such a circumstance must be of advantage to me. My uncle too makes some figure in Westminster-hall; and there's another advantage: then my grandfather's name would get me many friends. Is it not strange that a young fellow, that might enter the world with so many advantages, will not know his own interest? &c. &c.—What shall I say in answer to all this? For money, I neither dote upon it nor despise it; it is a necessary stuff enough. For ambition, I do not want that neither; but it is

not to sit upon a bench. In short, is it not a disagreeable thing to force one's inclination, especially when one's young? not to mention that one ought to have the strength of a Hercules to go through our common law; which, I am afraid, I have not. Well! but then, say they, if one profession does not suit you, you may choose another more to your inclination. Now I protest I do not yet know my own inclination, and I believe, if that was to be my direction, I should never fix at all: there is no going by a weathercock.—I could say much more upon this subject; but there is no talking tête-à-tête cross the Alps. Oh, the folly of young men, that never know their own interest! they never grow wise till they are ruined! and then nobody pities them, nor helps them.—Dear Gray! consider me in the condition of one that has lived these two years without any person that he can speak freely to. I know it is very seldom that people trouble themselves with the sentiments of those they converse with; so they can chat about trifles, they never care whether your heart aches or no. Are you one of these? I think not. But what right have I to ask you this question? Have we known one another enough, that I should expect or demand sincerity from you? Yes, Gray, I hope we have; and I have not quite such a mean opinion of myself, as to think I do not deserve it.—But, signor, is it not time for me to ask something about your further intentions abroad? Where do you propose going next? an in Apuliam? nam illo si adveneris, tanquam Ulysses, cognosces tuorum neminem. Vale. So Cicero prophesies in the end of one of his letters * —and there I end.

Yours, &c.

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* This letter (written apparently in much agitation of mind, which Mr. West endeavours to conceal by an unusual carelessness of manner) is chiefly inserted to introduce the answer to it; which ap-

LETTER XXV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Florence, July 16, 1740.

YOU do yourself and me justice, in imagining that you merit, and that I am capable of sincerity. I have not a thought, or even a weakness, I desire to conceal from you; and consequently on my side deserve to be treated with the same openness of heart. My vanity perhaps might make me more reserved towards you, if you were one of the heroic race, superior to all human failings; but as mutual wants are the ties of general society, so are mutual weaknesses of private friendships, supposing them mixt with some proportion of good qualities; for where one may not sometimes blame, one does not much care ever to praise. All this has the air of an introduction designed to soften a very harsh reproof that is to follow; but it is no such matter: I only meant to ask, Why did you change your lodging? Was the air bad, or the situation melancholy? If so, you are quite in the right. Only, is it not putting yourself a little out of the way of a people, with whom it seems necessary to keep up some sort of intercourse and conversation, though but little for your pleasure or entertainment, (yet there are, I believe, such among them as might give you both,) at least for your information in that study, which, when I left you, you thought of

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pears to me to be replete with delicate feeling, manly sense, and epistolary ease. If the reader should think as highly of it as I do, let me remind him that the writer was not now quite four and twenty years old.

applying to? for that there is a certain study necessary to be followed, if we mean to be of any use in the world, I take for granted; disagreeable enough (as most necessities are), but, I am afraid, unavoidable. Into how many branches these studies are divided in England, every body knows; and between that which you and I had pitched upon, and the other two, it was impossible to balance long. Examples show one that it is not absolutely necessary to be a blockhead to succeed in this profession. The labour is long, and the elements dry and unentertaining; nor was ever any body (especially those that afterwards made a figure in it) amused, or even not disgusted in the beginning; yet, upon a further acquaintance, there is surely matter for curiosity and reflection. It is strange if, among all that huge mass of words, there be not somewhat intermixed for thought. Laws have been the result of long deliberation, and that not of dull men, but the contrary; and have so close a connexion with history, nay, with philosophy itself, that they must partake a little of what they are related to so nearly. Besides, tell me, have you ever made the attempt? Was not you frighted merely with the distant prospect? Had the Gothic character and bulkiness of those volumes (a tenth part of which perhaps it will be no further necessary to consult, than as one does a dictionary) no ill effect upon your eye? Are you sure, if Coke had been printed by Elzevir, and bound in twenty neat pocket volumes, instead of one folio, you should never have taken him up for an hour, as you would a Tully, or drank your tea over him? I know how great an obstacle ill spirits are to resolution. Do you really think, if you rid ten miles every morning, in a week's time you should not entertain much stronger hopes of the chancellorship, and think it a much more probable thing than you do at present? The advantages you mention are not nothing; our inclinations are more than we imagine

in our own power; reason and resolution determine them, and support under many difficulties. To me there hardly appears to be any medium between a public life and a private one; he who prefers the first, must put himself in a way of being serviceable to the rest of mankind, if he has a mind to be of any consequence among them: nay, he must not refuse being in a certain degree even dependent upon some men who already are so. If he has the good fortune to light on such as will make no ill use of his humility, there is no shame in this: if not, his ambition ought to give place to a reasonable pride, and he should apply to the cultivation of his own mind those abilities which he has not been permitted to use for others' service. Such a private happiness (supposing a small competence of fortune) is almost always in every one's power, and the proper enjoyment of age, as the other is the employment of youth. You are yet young, have some advantages and opportunities, and an undoubted capacity, which you have never yet put to the trial. Set apart a few hours, see how the first year will agree with you, at the end of it you are still the master; if you change your mind, you will only have got the knowledge of a little somewhat that can do no hurt, or give you cause of repentance. If your inclination be not fixed upon any thing else, it is a symptom that you are not absolutely determined against this, and warns you not to mistake mere indolence for inability. I am sensible there is nothing stronger against what I would persuade you to, than my own practice; which may make you imagine I think not as I speak. Alas! it is not so; but I do not act what I think, and I had rather be the object of your pity, than that you should be that of mine; and, be assured, the advantage I may receive from it does not diminish my concern in hearing you want somebody to converse with freely, whose advice might be of more weight, and always at hand. We have some time

since come to the southern period of our voyages; we spent about nine days at Naples. It is the largest and most populous city, as its environs are the most deliciously fertile country, of all Italy. We sailed in the bay of Baiæ, sweated in the Solfatara, and died in the Grotto del Cane, as all strangers do; saw the Corpus Christi procession, and the King and the Queen, and the city underground (which is a wonder I reserve to tell you of another time), and so returned to Rome for another fortnight; left it (left Rome!) and came hither for the summer. You have seen * an Epistle to Mr. Ashton, that seems to me full of spirit and thought, and a good deal of poetic fire. I would know your opinion. Now I talk of verses, Mr. Walpole and I have frequently wondered you should never mention a certain imitation of Spenser, published last year by a †namesake of yours, with which we are all enraptured and enmarvailed.

LETTER XXVI.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, Aug. 21, N. S. 1740.

IT is some time since I have had the pleasure of writing to you, having been upon a little excursion cross the mountains to Bologna. We set out from

* The reader will find this in Dodsley's Miscellany, and also amongst Mr. Walpole's Fugitive Pieces.

† Gilbert West, Esq. This poem 'On the Abuse of Travelling,' is also in Dodsley's Miscellany.

hence at sunset, passed the Apennines by moonlight, travelling incessantly till we came to Bologna at four in the afternoon next day. There we spent a week agreeably enough, and returned as we came. The day before yesterday arrived the news of a pope; and I have the mortification of being within four days journey of Rome, and not seeing his coronation, the heats being violent, and the infectious air now at its height. We had an instance, the other day, that it is not only fancy. Two country fellows, strong men, and used to the country about Rome, having occasion to come from thence hither, and travelling on foot, as common with them, one died suddenly on the road; the other got hither, but extremely weak, and in a manner stupid; he was carried to the hospital, but died in two days. So, between fear and laziness, we remain here, and must be satisfied with the accounts other people give us of the matter. The new pope is called Benedict XIV. being created cardinal by Benedict XIII. the last pope but one. His name is Lambertini, a noble Bolognese, and archbishop of that city. When I was first there, I remember to have seen him two or three times; he is a short, fat man, about sixty-five years of age, of a hearty, merry countenance, and likely to live some years. He bears a good character for generosity, affability, and other virtues; and, they say, wants neither knowledge nor capacity. The worst side of him is, that he has a nephew or two; besides a certain young favourite, called Melara, who is said to have had, for some time, the arbitrary disposal of his purse and family. He is reported to have made a little speech to the cardinals in the Conclave, while they were undetermined about an election, as follows: 'Most eminent lords, here are three Bolognese of different characters, but all equally proper for the popedom. If it be your pleasures to pitch upon a saint, there is Cardinal Gotti; if

upon a politician, there is Aldrovandi; if upon a booby, here am I.' The Italian is much more expressive, and, indeed, not to be translated; wherefore, if you meet with any body that understands it, you may show them what he said in the language he spoke it. 'Eminssimi. Sigri. Ci siamo tré, diversi sì, mà tutti idonei al papato. Se vi piace un santo, c' è l'Gotti; se volete una testa scaltra, e politica, c' è l'Aldrovandé; se un coglione, ecco mi!' Cardinal Coscia is restored to his liberty, and, it is said, will be to all his benefices. Corsini (the late pope's nephew) as he has had no hand in this election, it is hoped, will be called to account for all his villanous practices. The Pretender, they say, has resigned all his pretensions to his eldest boy, and will accept of the grand chancellorship, which is thirty thousand crowns a year; the pension he has at present is only twenty thousand. I do not affirm the truth of this last article; because, if he does, it is necessary he should take the ecclesiastical habit, and it will sound mighty odd to be called his Majesty the Chancellor.—So ends my gazette.

LETTER XXVII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Florence, Sept. 25, N. S. 1740.

WHAT I send you now, as long as it is, is but a piece of a poem. It has the advantage of all fragments, to need neither introduction nor conclusion: besides, if you do not like it, it is but imagining that which went before, and came after, to be in-

finitely better. Look in Sandys's Travels for the history of Monte Barbaro, and Monte Nuovo.*

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* To save the reader trouble, I here insert the passage referred to:—'West of Cicero's Villa stands the eminent Gaurus, a stony and desolate mountain, in which there are diverse obscure caverns, choaked almost with earth, where many have consumed much fruitless industry in searching for treasure. The famous Lucrine Lake extended formerly from Avernus to the aforesaid Gaurus; but is now no other than a little sedgy plash, choaked up by the horrible and astonishing eruption of the new mountain; whereof, as oft as I think, I am easy to credit whatsoever is wonderful. For who here knows not, or who elsewhere will believe, that a mountain should arise (partly out of a lake and partly out of the sea), in one day and a night, unto such a height as to contend in altitude with the high mountains adjoining? In the year of our Lord 1538, on the 29th of September, when for certain days foregoing the country hereabout was so vexed with perpetual earthquakes, as no one house was left so entire as not to expect an immediate ruin; after that the sea had retired two hundred paces from the shore (leaving abundance of fish, and springs of fresh water rising in the bottom), this mountain visibly ascended about the second hour of the night, with an hideous roaring, horribly vomiting stones and such store of cinders as overwhelmed all the building thereabout, and the salubrious baths of Tripergula, for so many ages celebrated; consumed the vines to ashes, killing birds and beasts: the fearful inhabitants of Puzzol flying through the dark with their wives and children; naked, defiled, crying out, and detesting their calamities. Manifold mischiefs have they suffered by the barbarous, yet none like this which nature in-

Nec procul infelix se tollit in æthera Gaurus,
Prospiciens vitreum lugenti vertice pontum:
Tristior ille diu, et veteri desuetus olivâ
Gaurus, pampineæque eheu jam nescius umbræ;
Horrendi tam sæva premit vicinia montis,
Attonitumque urget latus, exuritque ferentem.

Nam fama est olim, mediâ dum rura silebant
Nocte, Deo victa, et molli perfusa quiete,
Infremuisse æquor ponti, auditamque per omnes
Latè tellurem surdùm immugire cavernas:
Quo sonitu nemora alta tremunt; tremit excita tuto
Parthenopæa sinu, flammantisque ora Vesevi.
At subitò se aperire solum, vastosque recessus
Pandere sub pedibus, nigrâque voragine fauces;
Tum piceas cinerum glomerare sub æthere nubes
Vorticibus rapidis, ardentique imbre procellam.
Præcipites fugêre feræ, perque avia longè
Sylvarum fugit pastor, juga per deserta,
Ah, miser! increpitans sæpè altâ voce per umbram
Nequicquam natos, creditque audire sequentes.
Atque ille excelso rupis de vertice solus
Respectans notasque domos, et dulcia regna,
Nil usquam videt infelix præter mare tristi
Lumine percussum, et pallentes sulphure campos,
Fumumque, flammasque, rotataque turbine saxa.

Quin ubi detonuit fragor, et lux reddita cœlo;
Mœstos confluere agricolas, passuque videres

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flicted.——This new mountain, when newly raised, had a number of issues; at some of them smoking and sometimes flaming; at others disgorging rivulets of hot waters; keeping within a terrible rumbling; and many miserably perished that ventured to descend into the hollowness above. But that hollow on the top is at present an orchard, and the mountain throughout is bereft of its terrors.'—*Sandys's Travels, book* iv. *page* 275, 277, *and* 278.

Tandem iterum timido deserta requirere tecta:
Sperantes, si forte oculis, si forte darentur
Uxorum cineres, miserorumve ossa parentum,
(Tenuia, sed tanti saltem solatia luctus)
Unà colligere et justâ componere in urnâ.
Uxorum nusquam cineres, nusquam ossa parentum
(Spem miseram!) assuetosve Lares, aut rura videbunt.
Quippe ubi planities campi diffusa jacebat;
Mons novus: ille supercilium, frontemque favillâ
Incanum ostentans, ambustis cautibus, æquor
Subjectum, stragemque suam, mœsta arva, minaci
Despicit imperio, soloque in littore regnat.

Hinc infame loci nomen, multosque per annos
Immemor antiquæ laudis, nescire labores
Vomeris, et nullo tellus revirescere cultu.
Non avium colles, non carmine matutino
Pastorum resonare; adeò undique dirus habebat
Informes latè horror agros saltusque vacantes.
Sæpius et longè detorquens navita proram,
Monstrabat digito littus, sævæque revolvens
Funera narrabat noctis, veteremque ruinam.

Montis adhuc facies manet hirta atque aspera saxis:
Sed furor exstinctus jamdudum, et flamma quievit,
Quæ nascenti aderat; seu fortè bituminis atri
Defluxêre olim rivi, atque effœta lacuna
Pabula sufficere ardori, viresque recusat;
Sive in visceribus meditans incendia, jam nunc
(Horrendum!) arcanis glomerat genti esse futuræ
Exitio, sparsos tacitusque recolligit ignes.

Raro per clivos haud secius ordine vidi
Canescentem oleam: longum post tempus amicti
Vite virent tumuli; patriamque revisere gaudens
Bacchus, in assuetis tenerum caput exserit arvis
Vix tandem, infidoque audet se credere cœlo.

There was a certain little ode* set out from Rome, in a letter of recommendation to you, but possibly fell into the enemies' hands, for I never heard of its arrival. It is a little impertinent to inquire after its welfare; but you, that are a father, will excuse a parent's foolish fondness. Last post I received a very diminutive letter: it made excuses for its unentertainingness, very little to the purpose; since it assured me, very strongly, of your esteem, which is to me the thing; all the rest appear but as the petits agrémens, the garnishing of the dish. P. Bougeant, in his Langage des Bêtes, fancies that your birds, who continually repeat the same note, say only in plain terms, 'Je vous aime, ma chere; ma chere, je vous aime;" and that those of greater genius indeed, with various trills, run divisions upon the subject; but that the *fond*, from whence it all proceeds, is 'toujours je vous aime.' Now you may, as you find yourself dull or in humour, either take me for a chaffinch or nightingale; sing your plain song, or show your skill in music, but in the bottom let there be, toujours, toujours de l'Amitié.

As to what you call my serious letter; be assured, that your future state is to me entirely indifferent. Do not be angry, but hear me; I mean with respect to myself. For whether you be at the top of Fame, or entirely unknown to mankind; at the Council-table, or Dick's coffee-house; sick and simple, or well and wise; whatever alteration mere accident works in you, (supposing it utterly impossible for it to make any change in your sincerity and honesty, since these are conditions sine quâ non) I do not see any likelihood of my not being yours ever.

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* The Alcaic Ode inserted in Letter XXI.

LETTER XXVIII.

MR. GRAY TO HIS FATHER.

Florence, Oct. 9, 1740.

THE beginning of next spring is the time determined for our return at furthest; possibly it may be before that time. How the interim will be employed, or what route we shall take, is not so certain. If we remain friends with France, upon leaving this country we shall cross over to Venice, and so return through the cities north of the Po to Genoa; from thence take a felucca to Marseilles, and come back through Paris. If the contrary fall out, which seems not unlikely, we must take the Milanese, and those parts of Italy, in our way to Venice; from thence pass through the Tyrol into Germany, and come home by the Low-Countries. As for Florence, it has been gayer than ordinary for this last month, being one round of balls and entertainments, occasioned by the arrival of a great Milanese lady; for the only thing the Italians shine in, is their reception of strangers. At such times every thing is magnificence: the more remarkable, as in their ordinary course of life they are parsimonious, even to a degree of nastiness. I saw in one of the vastest palaces in Rome (that of Prince Pamfilio) the apartment which he himself inhabited, a bed that most servants in England would disdain to lie in, and furniture much like that of a soph at Cambridge, for convenience and neatness. This man is worth 30,000*l.* sterling a year. As for eating, there are not two cardinals in Rome that allow more than six paoli, which is three shillings a day, for the expense of their table: and you may imagine they are still less extravagant

here than there. But when they receive a visit from any friend, their houses and persons are set out to the greatest advantage, and appear in all their splendour; it is, indeed, from a motive of vanity, and with the hopes of having it repaid them with interest, whenever they have occasion to return the visit. I call visits going from one city of Italy to another; for it is not so among acquaintance of the same place on common occasions. The new pope has retrenched the charges of his own table to a sequin (ten shillings) a meal. The applause which all he says and does meets with, is enough to encourage him really to deserve fame. They say he is an able and honest man; he is reckoned a wit too. The other day, when the senator of Rome came to wait upon him, at the first compliments he made him the pope pulled off his cap: his master of the ceremonies, who stood by his side, touched him softly, as to warn him that such a condescension was too great in him, and out of all manner of rule: upon which he turned to him, and said, 'Oh! I cry you mercy, good master; it is true, I am but a novice of a pope; I have not yet so much as learned ill manners.' * * *

LETTER XXIX.

MR. GRAY TO HIS FATHER.

Florence,* Jan. 12, 1741.

WE still continue constant at Florence, at present one of the dullest cities in Italy. Though it is

* Between the date of this and the foregoing letter, the reader will perceive an interval of full

the middle of the Carnival, there are no public diversions; nor is masquerading permitted as yet. The Emperor's obsequies are to be celebrated publickly the 16th of this month; and after that, it is imagined every thing will go on in its usual course. In the mean time, to employ the minds of the populace, the government has thought fit to bring into the city in a solemn manner, and at a great expense, a famous statue of the Virgin, called the Madonna dell'Impruneta, from the place of her residence, which is upon a mountain seven miles off. It never has been practised but at times of public calamity; and was done at present to avert the ill effects of a late great inundation, which it was feared might cause some epidemical distemper. It was introduced a fortnight ago in procession, attended by the council of regency, the senate, the nobility, and all the religious orders, on foot and bare-headed, and so carried to the great church, where it was frequented by an infinite concourse of people from all the country round. Among the rest I paid my devotions almost every day, and saw numbers of people possessed with the devil, who were brought to be exorcised. It was indeed in the evening, and the church-doors were always shut before the ceremonies were finished, so that I could not be eye-witness of the event; but that they were all cured is certain, for one never heard any more of them the next morning. I am to-night just returned from seeing our Lady make her exit with the same solemnities she entered. The show had a finer effect than before; for it was dark; and every body (even those of the mob that could afford it) bore a white-wax flambeau. I believe

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three months: as Mr. Gray saw no new places during this period, his letters were chiefly of news and common occurrences, and are therefore omitted.

there were at least five thousand of them, and the march was near three hours in passing before the window. The subject of all this devotion is supposed to be a large tile with a rude figure in bas-relief upon it. I say supposed, because since the time it was found (for it was found in the earth in ploughing) only two people have seen it; the one was, by good luck, a saint; the other was struck blind for his presumption. Ever since she has been covered with seven veils; nevertheless, those who approach her tabernacle cast their eyes down, for fear they should spy her though all her veils. Such is the history, as I had it from the lady of the house where I stood to see her pass; with many other circumstances; all which she firmly believes, and ten thousand besides.

We shall go to Venice in about six weeks, or sooner. A number of German troops are upon their march into this state, in case the King of Naples thinks proper to attack it. It is certain he has asked the Pope's leave for his troops to pass through his country. The Tuscans in general are much discontented, and foolish enough to wish for a Spanish government, or any rather than this.****

LETTER XXX.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

Florence, April 21, 1741.

I KNOW not what degree of satisfaction it will give you to be told that we shall set out from hence the 24th of this month, and not stop above a fortnight at any place in our way. This I feel, that you are the principal pleasure I have to hope for

in my own country. Try at least to make me imagine myself not indifferent to you; for I must own I have the vanity of desiring to be esteemed by somebody, and would choose that somebody should be one whom I esteem as much as I do you. As I am recommending myself to your love, methinks I ought to send you my picture (for I am no more what I was, some circumstances excepted, which I hope I need not particularize to you); you must add then, to your former idea, two years of age, a reasonable quantity of dulness, a great deal of silence, and something that rather resembles, than is, thinking; a confused notion of many strange and fine things that have swum before my eyes for some time, a want of love for general society, indeed an inability to it. On the good side you may add a sensibility for what others feel, and indulgence for their faults or weaknesses, a love of truth, and detestation of every thing else. Then you are to deduct a little impertinence, a little laughter, a great deal of pride, and some spirits. These are all the alterations I know of, you perhaps may find more. Think not that I have been obliged for this reformation of manners to reason or reflection, but to a severer schoolmistress, Experience. One has little merit in learning her lessons, for one cannot well help it; but they are more useful than others, and imprint themselves in the very heart. I find I have been haranguing in the style of the son of Sirach, so shall finish here, and tell you that our route is settled as follows: First to Bologna for a few days, to hear the Viscontina sing; next to Reggio, where is a fair. Now, you must know, a fair here is not a place where one eats gingerbread or rides upon hobby-horses; here are no musical clocks, nor tall Leicestershire women; one has nothing but masking, gaming, and singing. If you love operas, there will be the most splendid in Italy, four tip-top voices, a new theatre, the Duke and Duchess

in all their pomps and vanities. Does not this sound magnificent? Yet is the city of Reggio but one step above Old Brentford. Well; next to Venice by the 11th of May, there to see the old Doge wed the Adriatic Whore. Then to Verona, so to Milan, so to Marseilles, so to Lyons, so to Paris, so to West, &c. in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Eleven months, at different times, have I passed at Florence; and yet (God help me) know not either people or language. Yet the place and the charming prospects demand a poetical farewell, and here it is.

* * Oh Fæsulæ amœna
Frigoribus juga, nec nimium spirantibus auris,
Alma quibus Tusci Pallas decus Apennini
Esse dedit, glaucâque suâ canescere sylvâ!
Non ego vos posthàc Arni de valle videbo
Porticibus circum, et candenti cincta coronâ
Villarum longè nitido consurgere dorso,
Antiquamve Ædem, et veteres præferre Cupressus
Mirabor, tectisque super pendentia tecta.

I will send you, too, a pretty little sonnet of a Sig^r. Abbate Buondelmonte, with my imitation of it.

Spesso Amor sotto la forma
D'amistà ride, e s'asconde:
Poi si mischia, e si confonde
Con lo sdegno, e col rancor.
In Pietade ei si trasforma;
Par trastullo, e par dispetto:
Mà nel suo diverso aspetto
Sempr'egli, è l'istesso Amor.

Lusit amicitiæ interdum velatus amictu,
Et benè compositâ veste fefellit Amor:
Mox iræ assumsit cultus, faciemque minantem,
Inque odium versus, versus et in lacrymas:

Ludentem fuge, nec lacrymanti, aut crede furenti;
Idem est dissimili semper in ore Deus.

Here comes a letter from you.—I must defer giving my opinion of * Pausanias till I can see the whole, and only have said what I did in obedience to your commands. I have spoken with such freedom on this head, that it seems but just you should have your revenge, and therefore I send you the beginning not of an epic poem, but of † a metaphysic one. Poems and metaphysics (say you, with your spectacles on) are inconsistent things. A metaphysical poem is a contradiction in terms. It is true, but I will go on. It is Latin too, to increase the absurdity. It will, I suppose, put you in mind of the man who wrote a treatise of canon law in hexameters. Pray help me to the description of a mixt mode, and a little episode about space.

Mr. Walpole and Mr. Gray set out from Florence at the time specified in the foregoing letter. When Mr. Gray left Venice, which he did the middle of July following, he returned home through Padua,

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* Some part of a tragedy under that title, which Mr. West had begun; but I do not find amongst Mr. Gray's papers either the sketch itself, or Mr. Gray's free critique upon it, which he here mentions.

† The beginning of the first book of a didactic poem, 'De Principiis Cogitandi.' The fragment which he now sent contained the first 53 lines. The reader will find a further account of his design, and all that he finished of the poem, in a subsequent section.

Verona, Milan, Turin, and Lyons: from all which places he writ either to his father or mother with great punctuality; but merely to inform them of his health and safety, about which (as might be expected) they were now very anxious, as he travelled with only a 'Laquais de Voyage.' These letters do not even mention that he went out of his way to make a second visit to the Grande Chartreuse*, and there wrote in the Album of the Fathers the following Alcaic† Ode, with which I conclude this section.

ODE.

Oh Tu, severi Religio loci,
Quocunque gaudes nomine (non leve
  Nativa nam certè fluenta
    Numen habet, veteresque sylvas;
Præsentiorem et conspicimus Deum
Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
  Clivosque præruptos, sonantes
    Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem;
Quàm si repôstus sub trabe citreâ
Fulgeret auro, et Phidiacâ manu)

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*. He was at Turin the 15th of August, and began to cross the Alps the next day. On the 25th he reached Lyons; therefore it must have been between these two dates that he made this visit.

† We saw in the 8th and 11th letters how much Mr. Gray was struck with the awful scenery which surrounds the Chartreuse, at a time his mind must have been in a far more tranquil state than when he wrote this excellent Ode. It is marked, I think, with all the finest touches of his melancholy Muse, and flows with such an originality of expression, that one can hardly lament he did not honour his own language by making it the vehicle of this noble imaginary and pathetic sentiment.

Salve vocanti ritè, fesso et
  Da placidam juveni quietem.
Quod si invidendis sedibus, et frui
Fortuna sacrâ lege silentii
  Vetat volentem, me resorbens
  In medios violenta fluctus:
Saltem remoto des, Pater, angulo
Horas senectæ ducere liberas;
  Tutumque vulgari tumultu
  Surripias, hominumque curis.

END OF THE SECOND SECTION.

SECTION III.

WHEN Mr. Gray returned from abroad, he found his father's constitution almost entirely worn out by the very severe attacks of the gout, to which he had been for many years subject; and indeed the next return of that distemper was fatal to him. * This happened about two months after his son reached London.

It has been before observed, that Mr. Philip Gray was of a reserved and indolent temper; he was also morose, unsocial, and obstinate; defects which, if not inherent in his disposition, might probably arise from his bodily complaints. His indolence had led him to neglect the business of his profession; † his obstinacy, to build a country-

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* He came to town about the 1st of September, 1741. His father died the 6th of November following, at the age of sixty-five.

† His business was that which at the time was called a money-scrivener; and it may not be amiss to mention, for the singularity of the thing, that Milton's father was of the same profession: but he also had 'music in his soul,' and was esteemed a considerable master in that science. Some of his compositions are extant in Old Wilby's Set of Airs, and in Ravenscroft's Psalms. The great poet alludes finely both to the musical genius and the trade of his father in those beautiful hexameters, "Ad Patrem," which are inserted amongst his Latin poems.

house at Wanstead, without acquainting either his wife or son with the design (to which he knew they would be very averse) till it was executed. This building, which he undertook late in life, was attended with very considerable expense, which might almost be called so much money thrown away; since, after his death, it was found necessary to sell the house for two thousand pounds less than its original cost. Mr. Gray, therefore, at this time found his patrimony so small, that it would by no means enable him to prosecute the study of the law, without his becoming burthensome to his mother and aunt. These two sisters had for many years carried on a trade * separate from that of Mrs. Gray's husband; by which having acquired what would support them decently for the rest of their lives, they left off business soon after his death, and retired to Stoke, near Windsor, to the house of their other sister, Mrs. Rogers, lately become the widow of a gentleman † of that name. Both of them wished Mr. Gray to follow the profession for which he, had been originally intended, and would undoubtedly have contributed all in their power to enable him to do it with ease and conveniency. He, on his part, though he had taken his resolution of declining it, was too delicate to hurt two persons for whom he had so tender an affection, by peremptorily declaring his real intentions; and therefore changed, or pretended to change, the line of that study; and, accordingly, the latter end of the subsequent year went to Cambridge, to take his bachelor's degree in civil law.

But the narrowness of his circumstances was not

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* They kept a kind of India warehouse on Cornhill, under the joint names of Gray and Antrobus.

† Mr. Rogers had in the earlier part of his life followed the profession of the law, but retired from business many years before his death. I suppose he was the uncle mentioned in Letter ix. Sect. 1.

the only thing that distressed him at this period. He had, as we have seen, lost the friendship of Mr. Walpole abroad: he had also lost much time in his travels; a loss which application could not easily retrieve, when so severe and laborious a study as that of the common law was to be the object of it; and he well knew that, whatever improvement he might have made in this interval, either in taste or science, such improvement would stand him in little stead with regard to his present situation and exigencies. This was not all: his other friend, Mr. West, he found, on his return, oppressed by sickness and a load of family misfortunes; which, were I fully acquainted with them, it would not be my inclination here to dwell upon. These the sympathizing heart of Mr. Gray made his own. He did all in his power (for he was now with him in London) to soothe the sorrows of his friend, and to try to alleviate them by every office of the purest and most perfect affection: but his cares were vain. The distresses of Mr. West's mind had already too far affected a body, from the first, weak and delicate. His health declined daily, and, therefore, he left town in March 1742, and, for the benefit of the air, went to David Mitchell's Esq., at Popes, near Hatfield, Hertfordshire; at whose house he died the 1st of June following.

It is from this place, and from the former date, that this third series of letters commences.

LETTER I.*

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

I WRITE to make you write, for I have not much to tell you. I have recovered no spirits as yet; but, as I am not displeased with my company, I sit purring by the fire-side in my arm-chair with no small satisfaction. I read too sometimes, and have begun Tacitus, but have not yet read enough to judge of him; only his Pannonian sedition in the first book of his Annals, which is just as far as I have got, seemed to me a little tedious. I have no more to say, but to desire you will write letters of a handsome length, and always answer me within a reasonable space of time, which I leave to your discretion.

Popes, March 28, 1742.

P. S. The new Dunciad! qu'en pensez vous?

LETTER II.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

I TRUST to the country, and that easy indolence you say you enjoy there, to restore you your health and spirits; and doubt not but, when the sun grows warm enough to tempt you from your

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* This letter is inserted as introductory only to the answer which follows.

fire-side, you will (like all other things) be the better for his influence. He is my old friend, and an excellent nurse, I assure you. Had it not been for him, life had often been to me intolerable. Pray do not imagine that Tacitus, of all authors in the world, can be tedious. An annalist, you know, is by no means master of his subject; and I think one may venture to say, that if those Pannonian affairs are tedious in his hands, in another's they would have been insupportable. However, fear not, they will soon be over, and he will make ample amends. A man, who could join the *brilliant* of wit and concise sententiousness peculiar to that age, with the truth and gravity of better times, and the deep reflection and good sense of the best moderns, cannot choose but have something to strike you. Yet what I admire in him above all this, is his detestation of tyranny, and the high spirit of liberty that every now and then breaks out, as it were, whether he would or no. I remember a sentence in his Agricola that (concise as it is) I always admired for saying much in a little compass. He speaks of Domitian, who upon seeing the last will of that general, where he had made him coheir with his wife and daughter, 'Satis constabat lætatum eum, velut honore, judicioque: tam cæca et corrupta mens assiduis adulationibus erat, ut nesciret a bono patre non scribi hæredem, nisi malum principem.'

As to the Dunciad, it is greatly admired: the Genii of Operas and Schools, with their attendants, the pleas of the Virtuosos and Florists, and the yawn of Dulness in the end, are as fine as any thing he has written. The Metaphysicians' part is to me the worst; and here and there a few ill-expressed lines, and some hardly intelligible.

I take the liberty of sending you a long speech of Agrippina; much too long, but I could be glad you would retrench it. Aceronia, you may remember, had been giving quiet counsels. I fancy,

if it ever be finished, it will be in the nature of Nat. Lee's Bedlam Tragedy, which had twenty-five acts and some odd scenes.

The speech herewith sent to Mr. West was the concluding one of the first scene of a tragedy, which I believe was begun the preceding winter. The Britannicus of Mr. Racine, I know was one of Mr. Gray's most favourite plays; and the admirable manner in which I have heard him say that he saw it represented at Paris *, seems to have led him to choose the death of Agrippina for this his first and only effort in the drama. The execution of it also, as far as it goes, is so very much in Racine's taste, that I suspect, if that great poet had been born an Englishman, he would have written precisely in the same style and manner. However, as there is at present in this nation a general prejudice against declamatory plays, I agree with a learned friend, who perused the manuscript, that this fragment will be little relished by the many; yet the admirable strokes of nature and character with which it abounds, and the majesty of its diction, prevent me from withholding from the few, who I expect will relish it, so great a curiosity (to call it nothing more) as part of a tragedy written by Mr. Gray. These persons well know, that till style and sentiment be a little more regarded, mere action and passion will never secure reputation to the author, whatever they may do to the actor. It is the business of the one 'to strut and fret his hour upon the stage;' and if he frets and struts enough, he is sure to find his reward in the plaudit of an upper gallery; but the other ought to have some regard

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* By Mademoiselle Dumesnil.

to the cooler judgment of the closet: for I will be bold to say, that if Shakspeare himself had not written a multitude of passages which please there as much as they do on the stage, his reputation would not stand so universally high as it does at present. Many of these passages, to the shame of our theatrical taste, are omitted constantly in the representation: but I say not this from conviction that the mode of writing, which Mr. Gray pursued, is the best for dramatic purposes. I think myself, what I have asserted elsewhere*, that a medium between the French and English taste would be preferable to either; and yet this medium, if hit with the greatest nicety, would fail of success on our theatre, and that for a very obvious reason. Actors (I speak of the troop collectively) must all learn to speak as well as act, in order to do justice to such a drama.

But let me hasten to give the reader what little insight I can into Mr. Gray's plan, as I find, and select it from two detached papers. The title and dramatis personæ are as follow:

AGRIPPINA:

A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Agrippina, the Empress mother.
Nero, the Emperor.
Poppæa, believed to be in love with Otho.
Otho, a young man of quality, in love with Poppæa.
Seneca, the Emperor's preceptor.
Anicetus, Captain of the guards.
Demetrius, the Cynic, friend to Seneca.
Aceronia, Confidant to Agrippina.

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* See Letters prefixed to Elfrida, particularly Letter II.

SCENE.—*The Emperors' Villa at Baiæ.*

The argument drawn out by him, in these two papers, under the idea of a plot and under-plot, I shall here unite; as it will tend to show that the action itself was possessed of sufficient unity.

The drama opens with the indignation of Agrippina, at receiving her son's orders from Anicetus to remove from Baiæ, and to have her guard taken from her. At this time Otho having conveyed Poppæa from the house of her husband Rufus Crispinus, brings her to Baiæ, where he means to conceal her among the crowd; or, if his fraud is discovered, to have recourse to the Emperor's authority; but, knowing the lawless temper of Nero, he determines not to have recourse to that expedient, but on the utmost necessity. In the mean time he commits her to the care of Anicetus, whom he takes to be his friend, and in whose age he thinks he may safely confide. Nero is not yet come to Baiæ; but Seneca, whom he sends before him, informs Agrippina of the accusation concerning Rubellius Plancus, and desires her to clear herself, which she does briefly; but demands to see her son, who, on his arrival, acquits her of all suspicion, and restores her to her honours. In the mean while Anicetus, to whose care Poppæa had been entrusted by Otho, contrives the following plot to ruin Agrippina: he betrays his trust to Otho, and brings Nero, as it were by chance, to the sight of the beautiful Poppæa; the Emperor is immediately struck with her charms, and she, by a feigned resistance, increases his passion; though, in reality, she is from the first dazzled with the prospect of empire, and forgets Otho: she therefore joins with Anicetus in his design of ruining Agrippina, soon perceiving that it will be for her interest. Otho, hearing that the Emperor had seen Poppæa, is much enraged; but not knowing that

this interview was obtained through the treachery of Anicetus, is readily persuaded by him to see Agrippina in secret, and acquaint her with his fears that her son Nero would marry Poppæa. Agrippina, to support her own power, and to wean the Emperor from the love of Poppæa, gives Otho encouragement, and promises to support him. Anicetus secretly introduces Nero to hear their discourse; who resolves immediately on his mother's death, and, by Anicetus's means, to destroy her by drowning. A solemn feast, in honour of their reconciliation, is to be made; after which she being to go by sea to Bauli, the ship is so contrived as to sink or crush her; she escapes by accident, and returns to Baiæ. In this interval, Otho has an interview with Poppæa; and being duped a second time by Anicetus and her, determines to fly with her into Greece, by means of a vessel which is to be furnished by Anicetus; but he, pretending to remove Poppæa on board in the night, conveys her to Nero's apartment: she there encourages and determines Nero to banish Otho, and finish the horrid deed he had attempted on his mother. Anicetus undertakes to execute his resolves; and, under pretence of a plot upon the Emperor's life, is sent with a guard to murder Agrippina, who is still at Baiæ in imminent fear, and irresolute how to conduct herself. The account of her death, and the Emperor's horror and fruitless remorse, finishes the drama.

I refer the reader to the 13th and 14th books of the Annals of Tacitus for the facts on which this story is founded: by turning to that author, he will easily see how far the poet thought it necessary to deviate from the truth of history. I shall only further observe, that as such a fable could not possibly admit of any good character, it is terror only and not pity that could be excited by this tragedy, had it been completed. Yet it was surely capable of exciting this passion in a supreme degree, if

what the critics tell us be true, that crimes, which illustrious persons commit, affect us from the very circumstance of their rank, because we unite with that our fears for the public weal.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

AGRIPPINA, ACERONIA.

AGRIPPINA.

'TIS well, begone! your errand is performed:
[*Speaks as to Anicetus entering.*
The message needs no comment. Tell your master,
His mother shall obey him. Say you saw her
Yielding due reverence to his high command:
Alone, unguarded, and without a lictor,
As fits the daughter of Germanicus.
Say, she retired to Antium; there to tend
Her household cares, a woman's best employment.
What if you add, how she turn'd pale, and trembled;
You think, you spied a tear stand in her eye,
And would have dropped, but that her pride restrain'd it?
(Go! you can paint it well) 'twill profit you,
And please the stripling. Yet 'twould dash his joy
To hear the spirit of Britannicus
Yet walks on earth; at least there are who know
Without a spell to raise, and bid it fire
A thousand haughty hearts, unused to shake
When a boy frowns, nor to be lured with smiles

To taste of hollow kindness, or partake
His hospitable board: they are aware
Of th' unpledged bowl, they love not aconite.

ACERONIA.

He's gone; and much I hope these walls alone,
And the mute air, are privy to your passion.
Forgive your servant's fears, who sees the danger
Which fierce resentment cannot fail to raise
In haughty youth, and irritated power.

AGRIPPINA.

And dost thou talk to me, to me, of danger,
Of haughty youth, and irritated power;
To her that gave it being, her that arm'd
This painted Jove, and taught his novice hand
To aim the forked bolt; while he stood trembling,
Scared at the sound, and dazzled with its brightness?
'Tis like, thou hast forgot, when yet a stranger
To adoration, to the grateful steam
Of flattery's incense, and obsequious vows
From voluntary realms, a puny boy,
Decked with no other lustre than the blood
Of Agrippina's race, he lived unknown
To fame, or fortune; haply eyed at distance
Some edileship, ambitious of the power
To judge of weights and measures; scarcely dared
On expectation's strongest wing to soar
High as the consulate, that empty shade
Of long-forgotten liberty; when I
Oped his young eye to bear the blaze of greatness;
Show'd him where empire tower'd, and bade him strike
The noble quarry. Gods! then was the time
To shrink from danger; fear might then have worn
The mask of prudence: but a heart like mine,
A heart that glows with the pure Julian fire—
If bright Ambition from her craggy seat
Display the radiant prize, will mount undaunted,
Gain the rough heights, and grasp the dangerous honour.

ACERONIA.

Through various life I have pursued your steps,
Have seen your soul, and wonder'd at its daring:
Hence rise my fears. Nor am I yet to learn
How vast the debt of gratitude, which Nero
To such a mother owes; the world, you gave him,
Suffices not to pay the obligation.
I well remember too (for I was present)
When in a secret and dead hour of night,
Due sacrifice perform'd with barb'rous rites
Of mutter'd charms, and solemn invocation,
You bad the Magi call the dreadful powers,
That read futurity, to know the fate
Impending o'er your son: their answer was,
If the son reign, the mother perishes.
Perish (you cried) the mother! reign the son!
He reigns, the rest is heaven's; who oft has bad,
Ev'n when its will seem'd wrote in lines of blood,
Th' unthought event disclose a whiter meaning.
Think too how oft in weak and sickly minds
The sweets of kindness lavishly indulged
Rankle to gall; and benefits too great
To be repaid, sit heavy on the soul,
As unrequited wrongs. The willing homage
Of prostrate Rome, the senate's joint applause,
The riches of the earth, the train of pleasures,
That wait on youth, and arbitrary sway;
These were your gift, and with them you bestow'd
The very power he has to be ungrateful.

AGRIPPINA.

Thus ever grave, and undisturb'd reflection
Pours its cool dictates in the madding ear
Of rage, and thinks to quench the fire it feels not.
Say'st thou I must be cautious, must be silent,
And tremble at the phantom I have raised?
Carry to him thy timid counsels: he
Perchance may heed 'em. Tell him too, that one,
Who had such liberal power to give, may still

With equal power resume that gift, and raise
A tempest, that shall shake her own creation
To its original atoms—tell me! say
This mighty emperor, this dreaded hero,
Has he beheld the glittering front of war?
Knows his soft ear the trumpet's thrilling voice,
And outcry of the battle? Have his limbs
Sweat under iron harness? Is he not
The silken son of dalliance, nursed in ease
And pleasure's flowery lap?—Rubellius lives,
And Sylla has his friends, though school'd by fear
To bow the supple knee, and court the times
With shows of fair obeisance; and a call,
Like mine, might serve belike to wake pretensions
Drowsier than theirs, who boast the genuine blood
Of our imperial house.

ACERONIA.

Did I not wish to check this dangerous passion,
I might remind my mistress that her nod
Can rouse eight hardy legions, wont to stem
With stubborn nerves the tide, and face the rigour
Of bleak Germania's snows. Four, not less brave,
That in Armenia quell the Parthian force
Under the warlike Corbulo, by you
Mark'd for their leader: these, by ties confirm'd,
Of old respect and gratitude, are yours.
Surely the Masians too, and those of Egypt,
Have not forgot your sire: the eye of Rome
And the Prætorian camp have long revered,
With custom'd awe, the daughter, sister, wife,
And mother of their Cæsars.

AGRIPPINA.

Ha! by Juno,
It bears a noble semblance. On this base
My great revenge shall rise; or say we sound
The trump of liberty; there will not want,
Even in the servile senate, ears to own
Her spirit-stirring voice; Soranus there,

And Cassius; Vetus too, and Thrasea,
Minds of the antique cast, rough, stubborn souls,
That struggle with the yoke. How shall the spark
Unquenchable, that glows within their breasts,
Blaze into freedom, when the idle herd
(Slaves from the womb, created but to stare,
And bellow in the Circus) yet will start,
And shake 'em at the name of liberty,
Stung by a senseless word, a vain tradition,
As there were magic in it? wrinkled beldams
Teach it their grandchildren, as somewhat rare
That anciently appear'd, but when, extends
Beyond their chronicle—oh! 'tis a cause
To arm the hand of childhood, and rebrace
The slacken'd sinews of time-wearied age.
Yes, we may meet, ingrateful boy, we may!
Again the buried genius of old Rome
Shall from the dust uprear his reverend head,
Roused by the shout of millions: there before
His high tribunal thou and I appear.
Let majesty sit on thy awful brow,
And lighten from thy eye: around thee call
The gilded swarm that wantons in the sunshine
Of thy dull favour; Seneca be there
In gorgeous phrase of labour'd eloquence
To dress thy plea, and Burrhus strengthen it
With his plain soldier's oath, and honest seeming.
Against thee, liberty and Agrippina:
The world, the prize; and fair befall the victors.
But soft! why do I waste the fruitless hours
In threats unexecuted? Haste thee, fly
These hated walls, that seem to mock my shame,
And cast me forth in duty to their lord.

ACERONIA.

'Tis time we go, the sun is high advanced,
And, ere mid-day, Nero will come to Baiæ.

AGRIPPINA.

My thought aches at him; not the basilisk

More deadly to the sight, than is to me
The cool injurious eye of frozen kindness.
I will not meet its poison. Let him feel
Before he sees me.

ACERONIA.

Why then stays my sovereign,
Where he so soon may——

AGRIPPINA.

Yes, I will be gone,
But not to Antium—all shall be confess'd,
Whate'er the frivolous tongue of giddy fame
Has spread among the crowd; things, that but whisper'd
Have arch'd the hearer's brow, and riveted
His eyes in fearful extasy: no matter
What; so't be strange, and dreadful.—Sorceries,
Assassinations, poisonings—the deeper
My guilt, the blacker his ingratitude.
And you, ye manes of ambition's victims,
Enshrined Claudius, with the pitied ghosts
Of the Syllani, doom'd to early death,
(Ye unavailing horrors, fruitless crimes!)
If from the realms of night my voice ye hear,
In lieu of penitence, and vain remorse,
Accept my vengeance. Though by me ye bled,
He was the cause. My love, my fears for him
Dried the soft springs of pity in my heart,
And froze them up with deadly cruelty.
Yet if your injured shades demand my fate,
If murder cries for murder, blood for blood,
Let me not fall alone: but crush his pride,
And sink the traitor in his mother's ruin.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

OTHO, POPPÆA.

OTHO.

Thus far we're safe. Thanks to the rosy queen
Of amorous thefts: and had her wanton son
Lent us his wings, we could not have beguiled
With more elusive speed the dazzled sight
Of wakeful jealousy. Be gay securely;
Dispel, my fair, with smiles, the tim'rous cloud
That hangs on thy clear brow. So Helen look'd,
So her white neck reclined, so was she borne
By the young Trojan to his gilded bark
With fond reluctance, yielding modesty,
And oft reverted eye, as if she knew not
Whether she fear'd, or wish'd to be pursued.

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LETTER III.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

Popes, April 4, 1742.

I OWN in general I think Agrippina's speech too long*; but how to retrench it, I know not: but I

* The editor has obviated this objection, not by retrenching, but by putting part of it into the mouth

have something else to say, and that is in relation to the style, which appears to me too antiquated. Racine was of another opinion; he nowhere gives you the phrases of Ronsard: his language is the language of the times, and that of the purest sort; so that his French is reckoned a standard. I will not decide what style is fit for our English stage; but I should rather choose one that bordered upon Cato, than upon Shakspeare. One may imitate (if one can) Shakspeare's manner, his surprising strokes of true nature, his expressive force in painting characters, and all his other beauties; preserving at the same time our own language. Were Shakspeare alive now, he would write a different style from what he did. These are my sentiments upon these matters: perhaps I am wrong, for I am neither a Tarpa, nor am I quite an Aristarchus. You see I write freely both of you and Shakspeare; but it is as good as writing not freely, where you know it is acceptable.

I have been tormented within this week with a most violent cough; for when once it sets up its note, it will go on, cough after cough, shaking and tearing me for half an hour together; and then it leaves me in a great sweat, as much fatigued as if I had been labouring at the plough. All this description of my cough in prose is only to introduce another description of it in verse, perhaps not worth your perusal; but it is very short, and besides has this remarkable in it, that it was the production of four o'clock in the morning, while I lay in my bed tossing and coughing, and all unable to sleep.

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of Aceronia, and by breaking it in a few other places. Originally it was one continued speech from the line 'Thus ever grave and undisturbed reflection' to the end of the scene; which was undoubtedly too long for the lungs of any actress.

Ante omnes morbos importunissima tussis,
Quá durare datur, traxitque sub ilia vires:
Dura etenim versans imo sub pectore regna,
Perpetuo exercet teneras luctamine costas,
Oraque distorquet, vocemque immutat anhelam:
Nec cessare locus: sed sævo concita motu
Molle domat latus, et corpus labor omne fatigat:
Unde molesta dies, noctemque insomnia turbant.
Nec Tua, si mecum Comes hic jucundus adesses,
Verba juvare queant, aut hunc lenire dolorem
Sufficiant tua vox dulcis, nec vultus amatus.

Do not mistake me, I do not condemn Tacitus: I was then inclined to find him tedious: the German sedition sufficiently made up for it; and the speech of Germanicus, by which he reclaims his soldiers, is quite masterly. Your New Dunciad I have no conception of. I shall be too late for our dinner if I write any more.

Yours.

LETTER IV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

London, April, Thursday.

YOU are the first who ever made a Muse of a cough; to me it seems a much more easy task to versify in one's sleep (that indeed you were of old famous for *), than for want of it. Not the wakeful nightingale (when she had a cough) ever sung so sweetly. I give you thanks for your warble, and wish you could sing yourself to rest. These wicked

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* I suppose at Eton school.

remains of your illness will sure give way to warm weather and gentle exercise; which I hope you will not omit as the season advances. Whatever low spirits and indolence, the effect of them, may advise to the contrary, I pray you add five steps to your walk daily for my sake; by the help of which, in a month's time, I propose to set you on horseback.

I talked of the Dunciad as concluding you had seen it; if you have not, do you choose I should get and send it to you? I have myself, upon your recommendation, been reading Joseph Andrews. The incidents are ill laid and without invention; but the characters have a great deal of nature, which always pleases even in her lowest shapes. Parson Adams is perfectly well; so is Mrs. Slipslop, and the story of Wilson; and throughout he shows himself well read in stage-coaches, country squires, inns, and inns of court. His reflections upon high people and low people, and misses and masters, are very good. However the exaltedness of some minds (or rather as I shrewdly suspect their insipidity and want of feeling or observation) may make them insensible to these light things (I mean such as characterize and paint nature), yet surely they are as weighty and much more useful than your grave discourses upon the mind *, the passions, and what not. Now as the paradisaical pleasures † of the Mahometans consist in playing

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* He seems here to glance at Hutchinson, the disciple of Shaftsbury; of whom he had not a much better opinion than of his master.

† Whimsically put.—But what shall we say of the present taste of the French, when a writer whom Mr. Gray so justly esteemed as M. Marivaux is now held in such contempt, that *Marivauder* is a fashionable phrase amongst them, and signifies neither more nor less than our own fashionable phrase of *prosing?* As to Crebillon, 'twas his

upon the flute and lying with Houris, be mine to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon.

You are very good in giving yourself the trouble to read and find fault with my long harangues. Your freedom (as you call it) has so little need of apologies, that I should scarce excuse your treating me any otherwise; which, whatever compliment it might be to my vanity, would be making a very ill one to my understanding. As to matter of style, I have this to say: The language of the age * is never the language of poetry; except among the French, whose verse, where the thought or image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself; to which almost every one, that has written, has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives: nay, sometimes words of their own composition or invention. Shakspeare and Milton have been great creators this way; and no one more licentious than Pope or Dryden, who perpetually borrow expressions from the former. Let me give you some instances from Dryden, whom every body reckons a great master of our poetical tongue. Full of *museful mourings*—unlike the *trim* of love—a pleasant *beverage*—a *roundelay* of love—stood silent in his *mood*—with knots and *knares* deformed—his *ireful mood*—in proud *array*—his *boon* was granted—and *disarray* and shameful rout—*wayward* but wise—*furbished* for the field—the *foiled dodderd*

' Egaremens du Cœur et de l'Esprit' that our author chiefly esteemed; he had not, I believe, at this time published his more licentious pieces.

* Nothing can be more just than this observation; and nothing more likely to preserve our poetry from falling into insipidity, than pursuing the rules here laid down for supporting the diction of it: particularly with respect to the drama.

oaks—*disherited—smouldring* flames—*retchless* of laws—*crones* old and ugly—the *beldam* at his side —the *grandam-hag—villanize* his father's fame.— But they are infinite: and our language not being a settled thing (like the French) has an undoubted right to words of a hundred years old, provided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible. In truth, Shakspeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellencies you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern dramatics:

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stampt, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up—

And what follows. To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated. However, the affectation of imitating Shakspeare may doubtless be carried too far; and it is no sort of excuse for sentiments ill-suited, or speeches ill-timed, which I believe is a little the case with me. I guess the most faulty expressions may be these—*silken* son of *dalliance* —*drowsier* pretensions—wrinkled *beldams*—*arched* the hearer's brow and *rivcted* his eyes in *fearful extasie.* These are easily altered or omitted: and indeed if the thoughts be wrong or superfluous, there is nothing easier than to leave out the whole. The first ten or twelve lines are, I believe, the best*; and as for the rest, I was betrayed into a

* The lines which he means here are from—*thus ever grave and undisturb'd reflection*—to

good deal of it by Tacitus; only what he has said in five words, I imagine I have said in fifty lines: such is the misfortune of imitating the inimitable. Now, if you are of my opinion, una litura may do the business, better than a dozen; and you need not fear unravelling my web. I am a sort of spider; and have little else to do but spin it over again, or creep to some other place and spin there. Alas! for one who has nothing to do but amuse himself, I believe my amusements are as little amusing as most folks. But no matter; it makes the hours pass; and is better than ἐν ἀμαθίᾳ καὶ ἀμουσίᾳ καταβιῶναι. Adieu.

LETTER V.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

TO begin with the conclusion of your letter, which is Greek, I desire that you will quarrel no more with your manner of passing your time. In my opinion it is irreproachable, especially as it produces such excellent fruit; and if I, like a saucy bird, must be pecking at it, you ought to consider that it is because I like it. No una litura, I beg you, no unravelling of your web, dear sir! only pursue it a little further, and then one shall be able to judge of it a little better. You know the crisis of a play is in the first act; its damnation or salvation wholly rests there. But till that first act is over, every body suspends his vote; so how do you think I can form, as yet, any just idea of the speeches in regard to their length or shortness?

Rubellius lives. For the part of the scene, which he sent in his former letter, began there.

The connexion and symmetry of such little parts with one another must naturally escape me, as not having the plan of the whole in my head; neither can I decide about the thoughts whether they are wrong or superfluous; they may have some future tendency which I perceive not. The style only was free to me, and there I find we are pretty much of the same sentiment: for you say the affectation of imitating Shakspeare may doubtless be carried too far; I say as much and no more. For old words we know are old gold, provided they are well chosen. Whatever Ennius was, I do not consider Shakspeare as a dunghill in the least: on the contrary, he is a mine of ancient ore, where all our great modern poets have found their advantage. I do not know how it is; but his old expressions * have more energy in them than ours, and are even more adapted to poetry; certainly, where they are judiciously and sparingly inserted, they add a certain grace to the composition; in the same manner as Poussin gave a beauty to his pictures by his knowledge in the ancient proportions: but should he, or any other painter, carry the imitation too far, and neglect that best of models Nature, I am afraid it would prove a very flat performance. To finish this long criticism: I have this further notion about old words revived, (is not this a pretty way of finishing?) I think them of excellent use in tales; they add a certain

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* Shakspeare's energy does not arise so much from these old expressions (most of which were not old in his time), but from his artificial management of them. This artifice in the great poet is developed with much exactness by Dr. Hurd in his excellent note on this passage in Horace's Ep. ad Pisones.

> Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum
> Reddiderit junctura novum.

See Hurd's Horace, vol. 1*st, Edit.* 4*th, p.* 49.

drollery to the comic, and a romantic gravity to the serious, which are both charming in their kind; and this way of charming Dryden understood very well. You need only read Milton to acknowledge the dignity they give the epic. But now comes my opinion that they ought to be used in tragedy more sparingly, than in most kinds of poetry. Tragedy is designed for public representation, and what is designed for that should be certainly most intelligible. I believe half the audience that come to Shakspeare's plays do not understand the half of what they hear.—But finissons enfin.—Yet one word more.—You think the ten or twelve first lines the best, now I am for the fourteen last*; add, that they contain not one word of ancientry.

I rejoice you found amusement in Joseph Andrews. But then I think your conceptions of Paradise a little upon the Bergerac. Les Lettres du Seraphim R. à Madame la Cherubinesse de Q. What a piece of extravagance would there be!

And now you must know that my body continues weak and enervate. And for my animal spirits they are in perpetual fluctuation: some whole days I have no relish, no attention for any thing; at other times I revive, and am capable of writing a long letter, as you see; and though I do not write speeches, yet I translate them. When you understand what speech, you will own that it is a bold and perhaps a dull attempt. In three words, it is prose, it is from Tacitus, it is of Germanicus. Peruse, perpend, pronounce †.

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* He means the conclusion of the first scene.—But here and throughout his criticism on old words, he is not so consistent as his correspondent; for he here insists that *all* ancientry should be struck out, and in a former passage he admits it may be used sparingly.

† This speech I omit to print, as I have generally

LETTER VI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

London, April, 1742.

I SHOULD not have failed to answer your letter immediately, but I went out of town for a little while, which hindered me. Its length (besides the pleasure naturally accompanying a long letter from you) affords me a new one, when I think it is a symptom of the recovery of your health, and flatter myself that your bodily strength returns in proportion. Pray do not forget to mention the progress you make continually. As to Agrippina, I begin to be of your opinion; and find myself (as women are of their children) less enamoured of my productions the older they grow. * She is laid up

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avoided to publish mere translations either of Mr. Gray or his friend.

* He never after awakened her; and I believe this was occasioned by the strictures which his friend had made on his dramatic style; which (though he did not think them well founded, as they certainly were not) had an effect which Mr. West, we may believe, did not intend them to have. I remember some years after I was also the innocent cause of his delaying to finish his fine ode on the progress of poetry. I told him, on reading the part he showed me, that 'though I admired it greatly, and thought that it breathed the very spirit of Pindar, yet I suspected it would by no means hit the public taste.' Finding afterwards that he did not proceed in finishing it, I often expostulated with him on the subject; but he always

to sleep till next summer; so bid her good night. I think you have translated Tacitus very justly, that is, freely; and accommodated his thoughts to the turn and genius of our language; which, though I commend your judgment, is no commendation of the English tongue, which is too diffuse, and daily grows more and more enervate. One shall never be more sensible of this, than in turning an author like Tacitus. I have been trying it in some parts of Thucydides (who has a little resemblance of him in his conciseness), and endeavoured to do it closely, but found it produced mere nonsense. If you have any inclination to see what figure Tacitus makes in Italian, I have a Tuscan translation of Davanzati, much esteemed in Italy; and will send you the same speech you sent me; that is, if you care for it. In the mean time accept of * Propertius. * * *

LETTER VII.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

Popes, May 5, 1742.

WITHOUT any preface I come to your verses, which I read over and over with excessive pleasure, and which are at least as good as Propertius. I am only sorry you follow the blunders of Broukhusius, all whose insertions are nonsense. I have some

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replied, 'No, you have thrown cold water upon it.' I mention this little anecdote, to show how much the opinion of a friend, even when it did not convince his judgment, affected his inclination.

* A translation of the 1st elegy of the 2d book in English rhyme; omitted for the reason given in the last note but one.

objections to your antiquated words, and am also an enemy to Alexandrines; at least I do not like them in elegy. But after all, I admire your translation so extremely, that I cannot help repeating I long to show you some little errors you are fallen into by following Broukhusius*. * * * Were I with you now, and Propertius with your verses lay upon the table between us, I could discuss this point in a moment; but there is nothing so tiresome as spinning out a criticism in a letter; doubts arise, and explanations follow, till there swells out at least a volume of undigested observations; and all because you are not with him whom you want to convince. Read only the letters between Pope and Cromwell in proof of this; they dispute without end. Are you aware now that I have an interest all this while in banishing criticism from our correspondence? Indeed I have; for I am going to write down a little ode (if it deserves the name) for your perusal, which I am afraid will hardly stand that test. Nevertheless I leave you at your full liberty; so here it follows.

ODE.

Dear Gray, that always in my heart
Possessest far the better part,
What mean these sudden blasts that rise
And drive the Zephyrs from the skies?
O join with mine thy tuneful lay,
And invocate the tardy May.

Come, fairest nymph, resume thy reign!
Bring all the Graces in thy train!
With balmy breath, and flowery tread,
Rise from thy soft ambrosial bed;

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* I have omitted here a paragraph or two, in which different lines of the Elegy were quoted, because I had previously omitted the translation of it.

Where, in elysian slumber bound,
Embow'ring myrtles veil thee round.

Awake, in all thy glories drest,
Recall the Zephyrs from the west;
Restore the sun, revive the skies,
At mine, and Nature's call, arise!
Great Nature's self upbraids thy stay,
And misses her accustom'd May.

See! all her works demand thy aid;
The labours of Pomona fade:
A plaint is heard from ev'ry tree;
Each budding flow'ret calls for thee;
The birds forget to love and sing;
With storms alone the forests ring.

Come then, with Pleasure at thy side,
Diffuse thy vernal spirit wide;
Create, where'er thou turn'st thy eye,
Peace, plenty, love, and harmony;
Till ev'ry being share its part,
And heav'n and earth be glad at heart.

LETTER VIII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

London, May 8, 1742.

I REJOICE to see you putting up your prayers to the May: she cannot choose but come at such a call. It is as light and genteel as herself. You bid me find fault; I am afraid I cannot; however I will try. The first stanza (if what you say to me in it did not make me think it the best) I should call the worst of the five (except the fourth line).

The two next are very picturesque, Miltonic, and musical; her bed is so soft and so snug that I long to lie with her. But those two lines, 'Great Nature' are my favourites. The exclamation of the flowers is a little step too far. The last stanza is full as good as the second and third; the last line bold, but I think not too bold. Now, as to myself and my translation, pray do not call names. I never saw Broukhusius in my life. It is Scaliger who attempted to range Propertius in order; who was, and still is, in sad condition† * * *. You see, by what I sent you, that I converse, as usual, with none but the dead: they are my old friends, and almost make me long to be with them. You will not wonder therefore, that I, who live only in times past, am able to tell you no news of the present. I have finished the Peloponnesian war much to my honour, and a tight conflict it was, I promise you. I have drank and sung with Anacreon for the last fortnight, and am now feeding sheep with Theocritus. Besides, to quit my figure (because it is foolish), I have run over Pliny's Epistles and Martial ἐκ παρέργου; not to mention Petrarch, who, by the way, is sometimes very tender and natural. I must needs tell you three lines in Anacreon, where the expression seems to me inimitable. He is describing hair as he would have it painted.

Ἑλικας δ ἔλευθέρως μοι
Πλοκάμων ἄτακτα συνθεὶς
Ἀφὲς ὡς θέλουσι κεῖθαι.

Guess, too, where this is about a dimple.

Sigilla in mento impressa Amoris digitulo
Vestigio demonstrant mollitudinem.

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† Here some criticism on the Elegy is omitted for a former reason.

LETTER IX.

MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

Popes, May 11, 1742.

YOUR fragment is in Aulus Gellius; and both it and your Greek delicious. But why are you thus melancholy? I am so sorry for it, that you see I cannot forbear writing again the very first opportunity; though I have little to say, except to expostulate with you about it. I find you converse much with the dead, and I do not blame you for that; I converse with them too, though not indeed with the Greek. But I must condemn you for your longing to be with them. What, are there no joys among the living? I could almost cry out with Catullus, 'Alphene immemor, atque unanimis false sodalibus!' But to turn an accusation thus upon another, is ungenerous; so I will take my leave of you for the present with a 'Vale, et vive paulisper cum vivis.'

LETTER X.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST.

London, May 27, 1742.

MINE, you are to know, is a white melancholy, or rather leucocholy for the most part; which, though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls joy or pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of a state, and ça ne laisse que de

s'amuser. The only fault of it is insipidity; which is apt now and then to give a sort of ennui, which makes one form certain little wishes that signify nothing. But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has somewhat in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, Credo quia impossibile est; for it believes, nay, is sure of every thing that is unlikely, so it be but frightful: and, on the other hand, excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and every thing that is pleasurable; from this the Lord deliver us! for none but he and sunshiny weather can do it. In hopes of enjoying this kind of weather, I am going into the country for a few weeks, but shall be never the nearer any society; so, if you have any charity, you will continue to write. My life is like Harry the Fourth's supper of hens. 'Poulets à la broche, poulets en ragôut, poulets en hâchis, poulets en fricasées.' Reading here, reading there; nothing but books with different sauces. Do not let me lose my desert then; for though that be reading too, yet it has a very different flavour. The May seems to be come since your invitation; and I propose to bask in her beams and dress me in her roses.

Et Caput in vernâ semper habere rosâ.

I shall see Mr. * * and his wife, nay, and his child too, for he has got a boy. Is it not odd to consider one's cotemporaries in the grave light of husband and father? There are my Lords * * and * * *, they are statesmen: do not you remember them dirty boys playing at cricket? As for me, I am never a bit the older, nor the bigger, nor the wiser than I was then: no, not for having been beyond sea. Pray how are you?

I send you an inscription for a wood joining to a park of mine; (it is on the confines of Mount Cithæron, on the left hand as you go to Thebes)

you know I am no friend to hunters, and hate to be disturbed by their noise.

Ἀζόμενος πολύθηρον ἐκηβόλου ἄλσος ἀνάσσας
τᾶς δεινᾶς τεμένη λεῖπε, κυναγὲ, θεᾶς
Μοῦνοι ἄρ ἔνθα κύνων ζαθέων κλαγγεῦσιν ὑλαγμοὶ
ανταχεῖς Νυμφᾶν ἀγροτερᾶν κελάδῳ*.

Here follows also the beginning of an Heroic Epistle; but you must give me leave to tell my own story first, because historians differ. Massinissa was the son of Gala, king of the Massyli; and, when very young at the head of his father's army, gave a most signal overthrow to Syphax, king of the Masæsylians, then an ally of the Romans. Soon after Asdrubal, son of Gisgo the Carthaginian general, gave the beautiful Sophonisba, his daughter, in marriage to the young prince. But this marriage was not consummated on account of Massinissa's being obliged to hasten into Spain, there to command his father's troops, who were auxiliaries of the Carthaginians. Their affairs at this time began to be in a bad condition; and they thought it might be greatly for their interest, if they could bring over Syphax to themselves. This in time they actually effected; and, to strengthen their new alliance, commanded Asdrubal to give his daughter to Syphax. (It is probable their ingratitude to Massinissa arose from the great change of affairs, which had happened among the Massylians during his absence; for his father and uncle were dead, and a distant relation of the royal family had usurped the throne.) Sophonisba was accordingly married to Syphax; and Mas-

* In the 12th Letter of the first Section, Mr. Gray says of his friend's translation of un Epigram of Posidippus, 'Græcam illam ἀφελείαν mirificè sapit.' The learned reader, I imagine, will readily give this tetrastic the same character.

sinissa, enraged at the affront, became a friend to the Romans. They drove the Carthaginians before them out of Spain, and carried the war into Africa, defeated Syphax, and took him prisoner; upon which Cirtha (his capital) opened her gates to Lælius and Massinissa. The rest of the affair, the marriage, and the sending of poison. every body knows. This is partly taken from Livy, and partly from Appian.

SOPHONISBA MASSINISSÆ.

EPISTOLA.

Egregium accipio promissi Munus amoris,
  Inque manu mortem, jam fruitura, fero:
Atque utinam citius mandasses, luce vel unâ;
  Transieram Stygios non inhonesta lacus.
Victoris nec passa toros, nova nupta, mariti,
  Nec fueram fastus, Roma superba, tuos.
Scilicet hæc partem tibi, Massinissa, triumphi
  Detractam, hæc pompæ jura minora suæ
Imputat, atque uxor quòd non tua pressa catenis,
  Objecta et sævæ plausibus urbis eo:
Quin tu pro tantis cepisti præmia factis,
  Magnum Romanæ pignus amicitiæ!
Scipiadæ excuses, oro, si tardius utar
  Munere. Non nimiùm vivere, crede, velim.
Parva mora est, breve sed tempus mea fama requirit:
  Detinet hæc animam cura suprema meam.
Quæ patriæ prodesse meæ Regina ferebar,
  Inter Elisæas gloria prima nurus,
Ne videar flammæ nimis indulsisse secundæ,
  Vel nimis hostiles extimuisse manus.
Fortunam atque annos liceat revocare priores,
  Gaudiaque heu! quantis nostra repensa malis.

Primitiasne tuas meministi atque arma Syphacis
Fusa, et per Tyrias ducta trophæa vias?
(Laudîs at antiquæ forsan meminisse pigebit,
Quodque decus quondam causa ruboris erit.)
Tempus ego certe memini, felicia Pœnis
Quo te non puduit solvere vota deis;
Mœniaque intrantem vidi: longo agmine duxit
Turba salutantum, purpureique patres.
Fœminea ante omnes longe admiratur euntem
Hæret et aspectu tota caterva tuo.
Jam flexi, regale decus, per colla capilli,
Jam decet ardenti fuscus in ore color!
Commendat frontis generosa modestia formam,
Seque cupit laudi surripuisse suæ.
Prima genas tenui signat vix flore juventas,
Et dextræ soli credimus esse virum.
Dum faciles gradiens oculos per singula jactas,
(Seu rexit casus lumina, sive Venus)
In me (vel certè visum est) conversa morari
Sensi; virgineus perculit ora pudor.
Nescio quid vultum molle spirare tuendo,
Credideramque tuos lentius ire pedes.
Quærebam, juxta æqualis si dignior esset,
Quæ poterat visus detinuisse tuos:
Nulla fuit circum æqualis quæ dignior esset,
Asseruitque decus conscia forma suum.
Pompæ finis erat *. Totâ vix nocte quievi:
Sin premat invitæ lumina victa sopor,

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* There is so much of nature in the sentiment, as well as poetry in the description of this triumphal entry of young Massinissa, that it seems much to be regretted the author did not finish this poem. But I believe he never proceeded further with it. I had therefore my doubts concerning the printing of so small a part; but as I thought it the best, because the only original specimen of Mr. Gray's Ovidian verse (the rest of his hexameters and pentameters being only translations either from English or Italian) I was willing to give it to the reader.

Somnus habet pompas, eademque recursat imago;
Atque iterum hesterno munere victor ades.

* * * * * *

Immediately after writing the preceding letter, Mr. Gray went upon a visit to his relations at Stoke; where he writ that beautiful little ode which stands first in his collection of poems. He sent it as soon as written to his beloved friend; but he was * dead before it reached Hertfordshire. He died † only twenty days after he had written the letter to Mr. Gray, which concluded with 'Vale, et vive paulisper cum vivis.' So little was the amiable youth then aware of the short time that he himself would be numbered amongst the living. But this is almost constantly the case with such persons as die of that most remediless, yet most flattering of all distempers, a consumption. Shall humanity be thankful or sorry that it is so? Thankful, surely: for as this malady generally attacks the young and the innocent, it seems the merciful intention of Heaven that, to these, death should come unperceived, and as it were by stealth; divested of one of his sharpest stings, the lingering expectation of their dissolution. As to Mr. Gray, we may assure

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* This singular anecdote is founded on a marginal note in his common-place book, where that ode is transcribed, and the following memorandum annexed: 'Written at Stoke the beginning of June 1742, and sent to Mr. West, not knowing he was then dead.'

† He was buried at Hatfield (the house called Popes being in that parish). On a grave-stone in the chancel is the following plain inscription: 'Here lieth the body of Richard West, Esq. only son to the Right Honourable Richard West, Esq. late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who died the 1st of June, 1742, in the 26th year of his age.'

ourselves that he felt much more than his dying friend, when the letter, which inclosed the ode, was returned unopened. There seems to be a kind of presentiment in that pathetic piece, which readers of taste will feel when they learn this anecdote; and which will make them read it with redoubled pleasure. It will also throw a melancholy grace (to borrow one of his own expressions) on the ode on a distant prospect of Eton, and on that to Adversity; both of them written the August following: for as both these poems abound with pathos, those who have feeling hearts will feel this excellence the more strongly, when they know the cause from whence it arose; and the unfeeling will, perhaps, learn to respect what they cannot taste, when they are prevented from imputing to a splenetic melancholy, what in fact sprung from the most benevolent of all sensations. I am inclined to believe that the Elegy in a Country Churchyard was begun, if not concluded, at this time also: though I am aware that, as it stands at present, the conclusion is of a later date; how that was originally, I have shown in my notes on the poem. But the first impulse of his sorrow for the death of his friend gave birth to a very tender sonnet in English, on the Petrarchian model; and also to a sublime apostrophe in hexameters, written in the genuine strain of classical majesty, with which he intended to begin one of his books, 'De Principiis Cogitandi.' This I shall shortly give the reader; but the sonnet, being completed, is inserted amongst the rest of his poems.

It may seem somewhat extraordinary, that Mr. Gray never attempted any thing in English verse (except the beginning of Agrippina, and a few translations), before the first ode lately mentioned. Shall we attribute this to his having been educated at Eton, or to what other cause? Certain it is, that when I first knew him, he seemed to set a greater value on his Latin poetry, than on that

which he had composed in his native language; and had almost the same foible then, which I have since known him laugh at in Petrarch, when we read that most entertaining of all books, entitled 'Memoires pour la vie de François Petrarque tirés de ses œuvres,' &c. I am apt to think that the little popularity which M. de Polignac's Anti-Lucretius acquired, after it had been so long and so eagerly expected by the learned, induced Mr. Gray to lay aside his didactic plan. However this may be, he writ no Latin verse after this period; except perhaps some part of the 1st book of the poem just mentioned. This therefore seems the proper place to introduce that fragment; which being the most considerable in itself of all his Latin compositions, and perhaps the most laboured of any of his poems, it were to be wished that I could give the reader more insight into his design, than the few scattered papers, which he has left, enable me to do. It is clear, however, from the exordium itself, that he meant to make the same use of Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, which Lucretius did of the dogmas of Epicurus. And the first six lines plainly intimate, that his general design was to be comprised in four books.

The 1st. On the Origin of our Ideas.

Unde Animus scire incipiat——

The 2d. On the Distribution of these Ideas in the Memory.

——— quibus inchoet orsa
Principiis seriem rerum, tenuemque catenam
Mnemosyne——

The 3d. On the Province of Reason, and its gradual Improvement.

—— Ratio unde, rudi sub pectore, tardum
Augeat imperium——

The 4th. On the Cause and Effects of the Passions.

——— et primum mortalibus ægris
Ira, Dolor, Metus, et Curæ nascantur inanes.

But he has not drawn out any of the arguments of these books, except a part of the first; and that only so far as he executed of it. This it will be proper here to insert; and also, for the ease of the reader, to repeat the several parts at the bottom of the subsequent pages.

General plan of the poem.—First, Invocation to Mr. Locke. Address to Favonius, showing the use and importance of the design.—Beginning.—Connexion of the soul and body: nerves, the instruments of sensation.—Touch, the first and most extensive sense, described.—Begins before the birth; pain, our first idea when born.—Seeing, the second sense.—Digressive encomium of light. The gradual opening and improvement of this sense, and that of hearing; their connexion with the higher faculties of the mind: sense of beauty and order and harmony annexed to them. From the latter, our delight in eloquence, poetry, and music derived.—Office of the taste and smell.—Internal sense of reflection, whereby the mind views its own powers and operations, compared to a young wood-nymph admiring herself in some fountain.—Admission of ideas, some by a single sense, some by two, others by every way of sensation and reflection. Instance in a person born blind, he has no ideas of light and colours; but he has those of figure, motion, extension, and space, (objects both of the sight and touch). Third sort, those which make their entrance into the mind by every channel alike; as pleasure and pain, power, existence, unity, and succession. Properties of bodies, whereby they make themselves known to us. Primary qualities: magnitude, solidity, mobility, texture, and figure. * * *

DE PRINCIPIIS COGITANDI.

LIBER PRIMUS.

AD FAVONIUM.

* UNDE Animus scire incipiat: quibus inchoet orsa
Principiis seriem rerum, tenuemque catenam
Mnemosyne; Ratio unde rudi sub pectore tardum
Augeat imperium; et primum mortalibus ægris
Ira, Dolor, Metus, et Curæ nascantur inanes,
Hinc canere aggredior. † Nec dedignare canentem,
O decus! Angliacæ certe O lux altera gentis!
Si quà primus iter monstras, vestigia conor
Signare incertâ, tremulâque insistere plantâ ‡.
Quin potius duc ipse (potes namque omnia) sanctum
Ad limen, (si ritè adeo, si pectore puro,)

---

* Plan of the poem.

† Invocation to Mr. Locke.

‡ It has been already observed in the note on Let. 17, Sect. I. p. 125, that Mr. Gray's hexameters, besides having the variety of Virgil's pauses, closed also with his elisions. For Virgil, as an attentive reader will immediately perceive, generally introduces one elision, and not unfrequently more, into those lines which terminate the sense. This gives to his versification its last and most exquisite grace, and leaves the ear fully satisfied. Mr. Gray could not fail to observe, and of course to aim at this happy effect of elisions in a concluding line; of which the present poem, in particular, affords indubitable and abundant proofs.

Obscuræ reserans Naturæ ingentia claustra.
Tu cæcas rerum causas, fontemque feverum
Pande, Pater; tibi enim, tibi, veri magne Sacerdos,
Corda patent hominum, atque altæ penetralia Mentis.
Tuque aures adhibe vacuas, facilesque, Favonî,
(Quod tibi crescit opus) * simplex nec despice carmen,
Nec vatem: non illa leves primordia motus,
Quanquam parva, dabunt. Lætum vel amabile quicquid
Usquam oritur, trahit hinc ortum; nec surgit ad auras,
Quin ea conspirent simul, eventusque secundent.
Hinc variæ vitaï artes, ac mollior usus,
Dulce et amicitiæ vinclum: Sapientia dia
Hinc roseum accendit lumen, vultuque sereno
Humanas aperit mentes, nova gaudia monstrans,
Deformesque fugat curas, vanosque timores:
Scilicet et rerum crescit pulcherrima Virtus.
Illa etiam, quæ te (mirùm) noctesque diesque
Assiduè fovet inspirans, linguamque sequentem
Temperat in numeros, atque horas mulcet inertes;
Aurea non aliâ se jactat origine Musa.
† Principio, ut magnum fœdus Natura creatrix
Firmavit, tardis jussitque inolescere membris
Sublimes animas; tenebroso in carcere partem
Noluit ætheream longo torpere veterno:
Nec per se proprium passa exercere vigorem est,
Ne sociæ molis conjunctos sperneret artus,
Ponderis oblita, et cœlestis conscia flammæ.
Idcircò ‡ innumero ductu tremere undique fibras
Nervorum instituit: tum toto corpore miscens
Implicuit latè ramos, et sensile textum,
Implevitque humore suo (seu lympha vocanda,
Sive aura est) tenuis certè, atque levissima quædam

---

* Use and extent of the subject.
† Union of the soul and body.
‡ Office of the nervous system.

Vis versatur agens, parvosque infusa canales
Perfluit; assidue externis quæ concita plagis,
Mobilis, incussique fidelis nuntia motûs,
Hinc indè accensâ contage relabitur usque
Ad superas hominis sedes, arcemque cerebri.
Namque illìc posuit solium, et sua templa sacravit
* Mens animi: hanc circum coëunt, densoque feruntur
Agmine notitiæ, simulacraque tenuia rerum:
Ecce autem naturæ ingens aperitur imago
Immensæ, variique patent commercia mundi.
Ac uti longinquis descendunt montibus amnes
Velivolus Tamisis, flaventisque Indus arenæ,
Euphratesque, Tagusque, et opimo flumine Ganges,
Undas quisque suas volvens, cursuque sonoro
In mare prorumpunt: hos magno acclinis in antro
Excipit Oceanus, natorumque ordine longo
Dona recognoscit venientûm, ultròque serenat
Cæruleam faciem, et diffuso marmore ridet.
Haud aliter species properant se inferre novellæ
Certatim menti, atque aditus quino agmine complent.
† Primas Tactus agit partes, primusque minutæ
Laxat iter cæcum turbæ, recipitque ruentem.
Non idem huic modus est, qui fratribus: amplius ille
Imperium affectat senior, penitusque medullis,
Visceribusque habitat totis, pellîsque recentem
Funditur in telam, et latè per stamina vivit.
Necdum etiam matris puer eluctatus ab alvo
Multiplices solvit tunicas, et vincula rupit;
Sopitus molli somno, tepidoque liquore
Circumfusus adhuc: tactus tamen aura lacessit
Jamdudum levior sensus, animamque reclusit.
Idque magis simul, ac solitum blandumque calorem
Frigore mutavit cœli, quod verberat acri
Impete inassuetos artus: tum sævior adstat,

---

* Sensation, the origin of our ideas.
† The touch, our first and most extensive sense.

Humanæque comes vitæ Dolor excipit; ille
Cunctantem frustrà et tremulo multa ore querentem
Corripit invadens, ferreisque amplectitur ulnis.
* Tum species primùm patefacta est candida Lucis
(Usque vices adeò Natura bonique, malique,
Exæquat, justâque manu sua damna rependit)
Tum primùm, ignotosque bibunt nova lumina soles.
† Carmine quo, Dea, te dicam, gratissimi cœli
Progenies, ortumque tuum; gemmantia rore
Ut per prata levi lustras, et floribus halans
Purpureum Veris gremium, scenamque virentem
Pingis, et umbriferos colles, et cærula regna?
Gratia te, Venerisque Lepos, et mille Colorum,
Formarumque chorus sequitur, Motusque decentes.
At caput invisum Stygiis Nox atra tenebris
Abdidit, horrendæque simul Formidinis ora,
Pervigilesque æstus Curarum, atque anxius Angor:
Undique Lætitiâ florent mortalia corda,
Purus et arridet largis fulgoribus Æther.
Omnia nec tu ideò invalidæ se pandere Menti
(Quippe nimis teneros posset vis tanta diei
Perturbare, et inexpertos confundere visus)
Nec capere infantes animos, neu cernere credas
Tam variam molem, et miræ spectacula lucis:
‡ Nescio quâ tamen hæc oculos dulcedine parvos
Splendida percussit novitas, traxitque sequentes;
Nonne videmus enim, latis inserta fenestris
Sicubi se Phœbi dispergant aurea tela,
Sive lucernarum rutilus colluxerit ardor,
Extemplo hùc obverti aciem, quæ fixa repertos
Haurit inexpletum radios, fruiturque tuendo.
Altior huic verò sensu, majorque videtur
Addita, Judicioque arctè connexa potestas,
Quod simul atque ætas volventibus auxerit annis,
§ Hæc simul, assiduo depascens omnia visu,

---

* Sight, our second sense.
† Digression on light.
‡ Sight, imperfect at first, gradually improves.
§ Ideas of beauty, proportion, and order.

Perspiciet, vis quanta loci, quid polleat ordo,
Juncturæ quis honos, ut res accendere rebus
Lumina conjurant inter se, et mutua fulgent.
Nec minor * in geminis viget auribus insita virtus,
Nec tantum in curvis quæ pervigil excubet antris
Hinc atque hinc (ubi Vox tremefecerit ostia pulsu
Aëriis invecta rotis) longèque recurset:
Scilicet eloquio hæc sonitus, hæc fulminis alas,
Et mulcere dedit dictis et tollere corda,
Verbaque metiri numeris, versuque ligare
Repperit, et quicquid discant Libethrides undæ,
Calliope quotiès, quotiès Pater ipse canendi
Evolvat liquidum carmen, calamove loquenti
Inspiret dulces animas, digitisque figuret.
† At medias fauces, et linguæ humentia templa
Gustus habet, quà se insinuet jucunda saporum
Luxuries, dona Autumni, Bacchique voluptas.
‡ Naribus interea consedit odora hominum vis,
Docta leves captare auras, Panchaïa quales
Vere novo exhalat, Floræve quod oscula fragrant
Roscida, cum Zephyri furtìm sub vesperis horâ
Respondet votis, mollemque aspirat amorem.
§ Tot portas altæ capitis circumdedit arci
Alma Parens, sensûsque vias per membra reclusit;
Haud solas: namque intùs agit vivata facultas,
Quâ sese explorat, contemplatusque repentè
Ipse suas animus vires, momentaque cernit.
Quid velit, aut possit, cupiat, fugiatve vicissìm
Percipit imperio gaudens; neque corpora fallùnt
Morigera ad celeres actus, ac numina mentis.
Qualis Hamadryadum quondam si fortè sororùm
Una, novos peragrans saltus, et devia rura;
(Atque illam in viridi suadet procumbere ripâ
Fontis pura quies, et opaci frigoris umbra)
Dum prona in latices speculi de margine pendet,
Mirata est subitam venienti occurrere Nympham:

---

* Hearing, also improvable by the judgment.
† Taste. ‡ Smell.
§ Reflection, the other source of our ideas.

Mox eosdem, quos ipsa, artus, eadem ora gerentem
Unà inferre gradus, unà succedere sylvæ
Aspicit alludens; seseque agnoscit in undis.
Sic sensu interno rerum simulacra suarum
Mens ciet, et proprios observat conscia vultus.
* Nec verò simplex ratio, aut jus omnibus unum
Constat imaginibus. Sunt quæ bina ostia nôrunt;
Hæ privos servant aditus; sine legibus illæ
Passìm, quà data porta, ruunt, animoque propinquant.
† Respice, cui a cunis tristes extinxit ocellos,
Sæva et in æternas mersit natura tenebras:
Illi ignota dies lucet, vernusque colorum
Offusus nitor est, et vivæ gratia formæ.
‡ Corporis at filum, et motus, spatiumque, locique
Intervalla datur certo dignoscere tactu:
Quandoquidem his iter ambiguum est, et janua duplex,
Exclusæque oculis species irrumpere tendunt
Per digitos. Atqui solis concessa potestas
Luminibus blandæ est radios immittere lucis.
§ Undique proporrò sociis, quacunque patescit
Notitiæ campus, mistæ lasciva feruntur
Turba voluptatis comites, formæque dolorum
Terribiles visu, et portâ glomerantur in omni.
‖ Nec vario minus introïtu magnum ingruit illud,
Quo facere et fungi, quo res existere circùm
Quamque sibi proprio cum corpore scimus, et ire
Ordine, perpetuoque per ævum flumine labi.
Nunc age quo valeat pacto, quà sensilis arte
¶ Affectare viam, atque animi tentare latebras

---

* Ideas approach the soul, some by single avenues, some by two, others by every sense.

† Illustration.—Light, an example of the first.

‡ Figure, motion, extension, of the second.

§ Pleasure, pain, of the third.

‖ Also power, existence, unity, succession, duration.

¶ Primary qualities of bodies.

Materies (dictis aures adverte faventes)
Exsequar. Imprimìs spatii quam multa per æquor
Millia multigenis pandant se corpora seclis,
Expende. Haud unum invenies, quod mente licebit
Amplecti, nedum propriùs deprendere sensu,
* Molis egens certæ, aut solido sine robore, cujus
Denique mobilitas linquit, texturave partes,
Ulla nec orarum circumcæsura coërcet.
Hæc conjuncta adeò totâ compage fatetur
Mundus, et extremo clamant in limine rerum,
(Si rebus datur extremum) primordia. Firmat
Hæc eadem tactus (tactum quis dicere falsum
Audeat?) hæc oculi nec lucidus arguit orbis.
Inde potestatum enasci densissima proles;
Nam quodcunque ferit vìsum, tangive laborat,
Quicquid nare bibis, vel concava concipit auris,
Quicquid lingua sapit, credas hoc omne, necesse est
Ponderibus, textu, discursu, mole, figurâ
Particulas præstare leves, et semina rerum.
Nunc oculos igitur pascunt, et luce ministrâ
Fulgere cuncta vides, spargique coloribus orbem,
Dum de sole trahunt alias, aliasque supernè
Detorquent, retròque docent se vertere flammas.
Nunc trepido inter se fervent corpuscula pulsu,
Ut tremor æthera per magnum, latèque natantes
Aurarum fluctus avidi vibrantia claustra
Auditûs queat allabi, sonitumque propaget.
Cominùs interdum non ullo interprete per se
Nervorum invadunt teneras quatientia fibras,
Sensiferumque urgent ultrò per viscera motum.

* * *

---

* Magnitude, solidity, mobility, texture, figure.

DE PRINCIPIIS COGITANDI.

LIBER QUARTUS.

HACTENUS haud segnis Naturæ arcana retexi
Musarum interpres, primusque Britanna per arva
Romano liquidum deduxi flumine rivum.
Cum Tu opere in medio, spes tanti et causa laboris,
Linquis, et æternam fati te condis in umbram!
Vidi egomet duro graviter concussa dolore
Pectora, in alterius non unquam lenta dolorem;
Et languere oculos vidi, et pallescere amantem
Vultum, quo nunquam Pietas nisi rara, Fidesque,
Altus amor Veri, et purum spirabat Honestum.
Visa tamen tardi demùm inclementia morbi
Cessare est, reducemque iterum roseo ore Salutem
Speravi, atque unà tecum, dilecte Favoni!
Credulus heu longos, ut quondàm, fallere Soles.
Heu spes nequicquam dulces, atque irrita vota!
Heu mœstos Soles, sine te quos ducere flendo
Per desideria, et questus jam cogor inanes!
At Tu, sancta anima, et nostri non indiga luctûs,
Stellanti templo, sincerique ætheris igne,
Unde orta es, fruere; atque o si secura, nec ultra
Mortalis, notos olìm miserata labores
Respectes, tenuesque vacet cognoscere curas;
Humanam si fortè altâ de sede procellam
Contemplêre, metus, stimulosque cupidinis acres,
Gaudiaque et gemitus, parvoque in corde tumultum
Irarum ingentem, et sævos sub pectore fluctus;
Respice et has lacrymas, memori quas ictus amore
Fundo; quod possum, juxtà lugere sepulchrum
Dum juvat, et mutæ vana hæc jactare favillæ.

* * * *

END OF THE THIRD SECTION.

SECTION IV.

THE three foregoing Sections have carried the reader through the juvenile part of Mr. Gray's life, and nearly, alas! to half of its duration. Those which remain, though less diversified by incidents, will, notwithstanding, I flatter myself, be equally instructive and amusing, as several of his most intimate friends have very kindly furnished me with their collections of his letters; which, added to those I have myself preserved, will enable me to select from them many excellent specimens of his more mature judgment, correct taste, and extensive learning, blended at the same time with many amiable instances of his sensibility: they will also specify the few remaining anecdotes, which occurred in a life so retired and sedentary as his: for the reader must be here informed that, from the winter of the year 1742 to the day of his death, his principal residence was at Cambridge. He indeed, during the lives of his mother and aunts, spent his summer vacations at Stoke; and, after they died, in making little tours on visits to his friends in different parts of the country: but he was seldom absent from college any considerable time, except between the years 1759 and 1762; when, on the opening of the British Museum, he took lodgings in Southampton-row, in order to have recourse to the Harleian and other manuscripts there deposited, from which he made several curious extracts*.

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* These, amounting in all to a tolerably-sized folio, are at present in Mr. Walpole's hands. He

It may seem strange that a person who had conceived so early a dislike to Cambridge, and who (as we shall see presently) now returned to it with this prejudice rather augmented, should, when he was free to choose, make that very place his principal abode for near thirty years: but this I think may be easily accounted for from his love of books, (ever his ruling passion) and the straitness of his circumstances, which prevented the gratification of it. For to a man, who could not conveniently purchase even a small library, what situation so eligible as that which affords free access to a number of large ones? This reason also accounts for another singular fact. We have seen that, during his residence at Stoke, in the spring and summer of this same year 1742, he writ a considerable part of his more finished poems. Hence one would be naturally led to conclude, that, on his return to Cambridge, when the ceremony of taking his degree was over, the quiet of the place would have prompted him to continue the cultivation of his poetical talents, and that immediately, as the Muse seems in this year to have peculiarly inspired him; but this was not the case. Reading, he has often told me, was much more agreeable to him than writing: he therefore now laid aside composition almost entirely, and applied himself with intense assiduity to the study of the best Greek authors; insomuch that, in the space of about six years, there were hardly any writers of note in that language which he had not only read but digested; remarking, by the mode of common-place, their contents, their difficult and corrupt passages, and

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has already printed the speech of Sir Thomas Wyat from them in the second number of his Miscellaneous Antiquities. The public must impute it to their own want of curiosity if more of them do not appear in print.

all this with the accuracy of a critic added to the diligence of a student.

Before I insert the next series of letters, I must take the liberty to mention, that it was not till about the year 1747 that I had the happiness of being introduced to the acquaintance of Mr. Gray. Some very juvenile imitations of Milton's juvenile poems, which I had written a year or two before, and of which the Monody on Mr. Pope's death was the principal *, he then, at the request of one of my friends, was so obliging as to revise. The same year, on account of a dispute which had happened between the master and fellows of Pembroke-Hall, I had the honour of being nominated by the Fellows to fill one of the vacant Fellowships †. I was at this time scholar of St. John's College, and Bachelor of Arts, personally unknown to the gentlemen who favoured me so highly; therefore that they gave me this mark of distinction and preference was greatly owing to Mr. Gray, who was well acquainted with several of that society, and to Dr. Heberden, whose known partiality to every, even the smallest degree of merit, led him warmly to second his recommendation. The reader, I hope, will excuse this short piece of

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* The other two were in imitation of 'l'Allegro et il Penseroso,' and entitled 'Il Bellicoso et il Pacifico.' The latter of these I was persuaded to revise and publish in the Cambridge Collection of Verses on the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748. The former has since got into a Miscellany, printed by G. Pearch, from the indiscretion, I suppose, of some acquaintance who had a copy of it.

† Though nominated in 1747, I was not elected Fellow till February, 1749. The Master having refused his assent, claiming a negative, the affair was therefore not compromised till after an ineffectual litigation of two years.

egotism, as it is written to express my gratitude, as well to the living as the dead, to declare the sense I shall ever retain of the honour which the Fellows of Pembroke-Hall then did me, and to particularise the time of an incident which brought me into the neighbourhood of Mr. Gray's College; and served to give that cement to our future intimacy, which is usually rendered stronger by proximity of place.

The letters, which I select for this Section, are from the date of the year 1742 to that of 1768, when Mr. Gray was made Professor of Modern History. This, as it is a considerable interval of time, will perhaps require me the more frequently to resume my narrative; especially as I cannot now produce one continued chain of correspondence.

LETTER I.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON*.

Cambridge, Dec. 27, 1742.

I OUGHT to have returned you my thanks a long time ago, for the pleasure, I should say prodigy, of your letter; for such a thing has not happened

---

* Of Old Park, near Durham. With this gentleman Mr. Gray contracted an acquaintance very early; and though they were not educated together at Eton, yet afterwards at Cambridge, when the Doctor was Fellow of Pembroke-Hall, they became intimate friends, and continued so to the time of Mr. Gray's death.

above twice within this last age to mortal man, and no one here can conceive what it may portend. You have heard, I suppose, how I have been employed a part of the time; how, by my own indefatigable application for these ten years past, and by the care and vigilance of that worthy magistrate the Man in Blue *, (who, I assure you, has not spared his labour, nor could have done more for his own son), I am got half way to the top of jurisprudence †, and bid as fair as another body to open a case of impotency with all decency and circumspection. You see my ambition. I do not doubt but some thirty years hence I shall convince the world and you that I am a very pretty young fellow; and may come to shine in a profession, perhaps the noblest of all except man-midwifery. As for you, if your distemper and you can but agree about going to London, I may reasonably expect in a much shorter time to see you in your three-cornered villa, doing the honours of a well-furnished table with as much dignity, as rich a mien, and as capacious a belly, as Dr. Mead. Methinks I see Dr. * *, at the lower end of it, lost in admiration of your goodly person and parts, cramming down his envy (for it will rise) with the wing of a pheasant, and drowning it in neat Burgundy. But not to tempt your asthma too much with such a prospect, I should think you might be almost as happy and as great as this even in the country. But you know best, and I should be sorry to say any thing that might stop you in the career of glory; far be it from me to hamper the wheels of your gilded chariot. Go on, Sir Thomas; and when you die (for even physicians must die), may the faculty in Warwick-lane erect your statue in the very niche of Sir John Cutler's.

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* A servant of the Vice-chancellor's for the time being, usually known by the name of Blue Coat, whose business it is to attend acts for degrees, &c.

† *i. e.* Bachelor of Civil Law.

I was going to tell you how sorry I am for your illness, but I hope it is too late now: I can only say that I really was very sorry. May you live a hundred Christmasses, and eat as many collars of brawn stuck with rosemary. Adieu, &c.

Though I have said that Mr. Gray, on his return to Cambridge, laid aside poetry almost entirely, yet I find amongst his papers a small fragment in verse, which bears internal evidence that it was written about this very time. The foregoing letter, in which he employs so much of his usual vein of ridicule on the University, seems to be no improper introduction to it: I shall therefore insert it here without making any apology, as I have given one, on a similar occasion, in the first Section.

It seems to have been intended as a Hymn or Address to Ignorance; and I presume, had he proceeded with it, would have contained much good satire upon false science and scholastic pedantry. What he writ of it is purely introductory; yet many of the lines are so strong, and the general cast of the versification so musical, that I believe it will give the generality of readers a higher opinion of his poetical talents than many of his lyrical productions have done. I speak of the generality; because it is a certain fact, that their taste is founded upon the ten-syllable couplets of Dryden and Pope, and upon these only.

HAIL, Horrors, hail! ye ever gloomy bowers,
Ye gothic fanes, and antiquated towers,
Where rushy Camus' slowly-winding flood
Perpetual draws his humid train of mud:

Glad I revisit thy neglected reign,
Oh take me to thy peaceful shade again.
But chiefly thee, whose influence breathed from high
Augments the native darkness of the sky;
Ah Ignorance! soft salutary power!
Prostrate with filial reverence I adore.
Thrice hath Hyperion roll'd his annual race,
Since weeping I forsook thy fond embrace.
Oh say, successful dost thou still oppose
Thy leaden Ægis 'gainst our ancient foes?
Still stretch, tenacious of thy right divine,
The massy sceptre o'er thy slumb'ring line?
And dews Lethean through the land dispense
To steep in slumbers each benighted sense?
If any spark of wit's delusive ray
Break out, and flash a momentary day,
With damp, cold touch forbid it to aspire,
And huddle up in fogs the dangerous fire.
Oh say—she hears me not, but careless grown,
Lethargic nods upon her ebon throne.
Goddess! awake, arise, alas my fears!
Can powers immortal feel the force of years?
Not thus of old, with ensigns wide unfurl'd,
She rode triumphant o'er the vanquish'd world;
Fierce nations own'd her unresisted might,
And all was ignorance, and all was night.
Oh sacred age! Oh times for ever lost!
(The school-man's glory, and the churchman's boast.)
For ever gone—yet still to Fancy new,
Her rapid wings the transient scene pursue,
And bring the buried ages back to view.
High on her car, behold the grandam ride
Like old Sesostris with barbaric pride;
* * * * a team of harness'd monarchs bend

* * * * *

LETTER II.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Peterhouse, April 26, 1744.

YOU write so feelingly to Mr. Brown, and represent your abandoned condition in terms so touching, that what gratitude could not effect in several months, compassion has brought about in a few days; and broke that strong attachment, or rather allegiance, which I and all here owe to our sovereign lady and mistress, the president of presidents and head of heads (if I may be permitted to pronounce her name, that ineffable Octogrammaton), the power of Laziness. You must know she had been pleased to appoint me (in preference to so many old servants of hers who had spent their whole lives in qualifying themselves for the office) grand picker of straws and push-pin player to her Supinity (for that is her title.) The first is much in the nature of lord president of the council; and the other like the groom-porter, only without the profit; but as they are both things of very great honour in this country, I considered with myself the load of envy attending such great charges; and besides (between you and me) I found myself unable to support the fatigue of keeping up the appearance that persons of such dignity must do, so I thought proper to decline it, and excused myself as well as I could. However, as you see such an affair must take up a good deal of time, and it has always been the policy of this court to proceed slowly, like the Imperial and that of Spain, in the despatch of business, you will on this account the easier forgive me, if I have not answered your letter before.

You desire to know, it seems, what character the poem of your young friend bears here*. I wonder that you ask the opinion of a nation, where those, who pretend to judge, do not judge at all; and the rest (the wiser part) wait to catch the judgment of the world immediately above them; that is, Dick's and the Rainbow Coffee-houses. Your readier way would be to ask the ladies that keep the bars in those two theatres of criticism. However, to show you that I am a judge, as well as my countrymen, I will tell you, though I have rather turned it over than read it, (but no matter; no more have they) that it seems to me above the middling; and now and then, for a little while, rises even to the best, particularly in description. It is often obscure, and even unintelligible; and too much infected with the Hutchinson jargon. In short, its great fault is, that it was published at least nine years too early. And so methinks in a few words, 'à la mode du Temple,' I have very pertly despatched what perhaps may for several years have employed a very ingenious man worth fifty of myself.

You are much in the right to have a taste for Socrates; he was a divine man. I must tell you, by way of news of the place, that the other day a certain new professor made an apology for him an hour long in the schools; and all the world brought in Socrates guilty, except the people of his own college.

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* Pleasures of the Imagination. From the posthumous publication of Dr. Akenside's Poems, it should seem that the author had very much the same opinion afterwards of his own work, which Mr. Gray here expresses: since he undertook a reform of it, which must have given him, had he concluded it, as much trouble as if he had written it entirely new.

The Muse is gone, and left me in far worse company; if she returns, you will hear of her. As to her child* (since you are so good as to inquire after it) it is but a puling chit yet, not a bit grown to speak of: I believe, poor thing, it has got the worms that will carry it off at last. Mr. Trollope and I are in a course of tar-water; he for his present, and I for my future distempers. If you think it will kill me, send away a man and horse directly; for I drink like a fish. Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, Dec. 11, 1746.

I WOULD make you an excuse, (as indeed I ought) if they were a sort of thing I ever gave any credit to myself in these cases; but I know they are never true. Nothing so silly as indolence when it hopes to disguise itself: every one knows it by its saunter, as they do his Majesty (God bless him) at a masquerade, by the firmness of his tread and the elevation of his chin. However, somewhat I had to say that has a little shadow of reason in it. I have been in town (I suppose you know) flaunting about at all kind of public places with two friends lately returned from abroad. The world itself has some attractions in it to a solitary of six years standing; and agreeable well-meaning people of sense (thank Heaven there are so few of them) are

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* He here means his poem 'De Principiis Cogitandi.' See the last Section.

my peculiar magnet. It is no wonder then if I felt some reluctance at parting with them so soon; or if my spirits, when I returned back to my cell, should sink for a time, not indeed to storm and tempest, but a good deal below changeable. Besides, Seneca says (and my pitch of philosophy does not pretend to be much above Seneca) 'Nunquam mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo quod composui, turbatur: aliquid ex his, quæ fugavi, redit.' And it will happen to such as us, mere imps of science. Well it may, when Wisdom herself is forced often

in sweet retired solitude
To plume her feathers, and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.

It is a foolish thing that without money one cannot either live as one pleases, or where and with whom one pleases. Swift somewhere says, that money is liberty; and I fear money is friendship too and society, and almost every external blessing. It is a great, though an ill-natured, comfort, to see most of those who have it in plenty, without pleasure, without liberty, and without friends.

I am not altogether of your opinion as to your historical consolation in time of trouble: a calm melancholy it may produce, a stiller sort of despair (and that only in some circumstances, and on some constitutions); but I doubt no real comfort or content can ever arise in the human mind, but from hope.

I take it very ill you should have been in the twentieth year of the war*, and yet say nothing of the retreat before Syracuse: Is it, or is it not, the finest thing you ever read in your life? And how does Xenophon or Plutarch agree with you? For

* Thucydides, l. vii.

my part I read Aristotle, his Poetics, Politics, and Morals; though I do not well know which is which. In the first place, he is the hardest author by far I ever meddled with. Then he has a dry conciseness, that makes one imagine one is perusing a table of contents rather than a book: it tastes for all the world like chopped hay, or rather like chopped logic; for he has a violent affection to that art, being in some sort his own invention; so that he often loses himself in little trifling distinctions and verbal niceties; and, what is worse, leaves you to extricate him as well as you can. Thirdly, he has suffered vastly from the transcribblers, as all authors of great brevity necessarily must. Fourthly and lastly, he has abundance of fine uncommon things, which make him well worth the pains he gives one. You see what you are to expect from him.

LETTER IV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, 1747.

I HAD been absent from this place a few days, and at my return found Cibber's book * upon my table: I return you my thanks for it, and have already run over a considerable part; for who could resist Mrs. Letitia Pilkington's recommendation? (By the

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* Entitled 'Observations on Cicero's Character,' or some such thing; for I have not the book by me, and it has been long since forgot.

way, is there any such gentlewoman*? or has somebody put on the style of a scribbling woman's panegyric to deceive and laugh at Colley?) He seems to me full as pert and as dull as usual. There are whole pages of common-place stuff, that for stupidity might have been wrote by Dr. Waterland, or any other grave divine, did not the flirting saucy phrase give them at a distance an air of youth and gaiety: it is very true, he is often in the right with regard to Tully's weaknesses; but was there any one that did not see them? Those, I imagine, that would find a man after God's own heart, are no more likely to trust the doctor's recommendation than the player's; and as to Reason and Truth, would they know their own faces, do you think, if they looked in the glass, and saw themselves so bedizened in tattered fringe and tarnished lace, in French jewels, and dirty furbelows, the frippery of a stroller's wardrobe?

Literature, to take it in its most comprehensive sense, and include every thing that requires invention or judgment, or barely application and industry, seems indeed drawing apace to its dissolution, and remarkably since the beginning of the war. I remember to have read Mr. Spence's pretty book; though (as he then had not been at Rome for the last time) it must have increased greatly since that in bulk. If you ask me what I read, I protest I do not recollect one syllable; but only in general, that they were the best bred sort of men in the world, just the kind of *frinds* one would wish to meet in a fine summer's evening, if one wished to meet any at all. The heads and tails of the dialogues, published separate in 16mo. would make the sweetest reading in *natiur* for young gentlemen of family and fortune, that are learning to

* This lady made herself more known some time after the date of this letter.

dance.* I rejoice to hear there is such a crowd of dramatical performances coming upon the stage. Agrippina can stay very well, she thanks you, and be damned at leisure: I hope in God you have not mentioned, or showed to any body that scene (for trusting in its badness, I forgot to caution you concerning it); but I heard the other day, that I was writing a play, and was told the name of it, which nobody here could know, I am sure. The employment you propose to me much better suits my inclination; but I much fear our joint-stock would hardly compose a small volume; what I have is less considerable than you would imagine, and of that little we should not be willing to publish all * * *†

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* This ridicule on the platonic way of dialogue (as it was aimed to be, though nothing less resembles it) is, in my opinion, admirable. Lord Shaftsbury was the first who brought it into vogue, and Mr. Spence (if we except a few Scotch writers) the last who practised it. As it has now been laid aside some years, we may hope, for the sake of true taste, that this frippery mode of composition will never come into fashion again; especially since Dr. Hurd has pointed out, by example as well as precept, wherein the true beauty of dialogue-writing consists.

† What is here omitted was a short catalogue of Mr. West's poetry then in Mr. Gray's hands; the reader has seen as much of it in the three foregoing sections as I am persuaded his friend would have published, had he prosecuted the task which Mr. Walpole recommended to him, that of printing his own and Mr. West's Poems in the same volume; and which we also perceive from this letter, he was not averse from doing. This therefore seems to vindicate the editor's plan in arranging these papers; as he is enabled by it not only to show what Mr. West would have been, but what

This is all I can any where find. You, I imagine, may have a good deal more. I should not care how unwise the ordinary run of readers might think my affection for him, provided those few, that ever loved any body, or judged of any thing rightly, might, from such little remains, be moved to consider what he would have been; and to wish that heaven had granted him a longer life and a mind more at ease.

I send you a few lines, though Latin, which you do not like, for the sake of the subject*; it makes part of a large design, and is the beginning of the fourth book, which was intended to treat of the passions. Excuse the three first verses; you know vanity, with the Romans, is a poetical licence.

LETTER V.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, 1747.

I HAVE abundance of thanks to return you for the entertainment Mr. Spence's book has given me, which I have almost run over already; and I much fear (see what it is to make a figure) the breadth of the margin, and the neatness of the prints, which are better done than one could expect, have prevailed upon me to like it far better than I did in

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Mr. Gray was, I mean not as a poet, for that the world knew before, but as an universal scholar, and (what is still of more consequence), as an excellent moral man.

* The admirable apostrophe to Mr. West; see page 251.

manuscript, for I think it is not the very genteel deportment of Polymetis, nor the lively wit of Mysagetes, that have at all corrupted me.

There is one fundamental fault, from whence most of the little faults throughout the whole arise. He professes to neglect the Greek writers, who could have given him more instruction on the very heads he professes to treat than all the others put together: who does not know, that upon the Latin, the Sabine, and Hetruscan mythology (which probably might themselves, at a remoter period of time, owe their origin to Greece too) the Romans ingrafted almost the whole religion of Greece to make what is called their own? It would be hard to find any one circumstance that is properly of their invention. In the ruder days of the republic, the picturesque part of their religion (which is the province he has chose, and would be thought to confine himself to) was probably borrowed entirely from the Tuscans, who, as a wealthy and trading people, may be well supposed, and indeed are known, to have had the arts flourishing in a considerable degree among them. What could inform him here, but Dio. Halicarnassus (who expressly treats of those times with great curiosity and industry) and the remains of the first Roman writers? The former he has neglected as a Greek; and the latter, he says, were but little acquainted with the arts, and consequently are but of small authority. In the better ages, when every temple and public building in Rome was peopled with imported deities and heroes, and when all the artists of reputation they made use of were Greeks, what wonder, if their eyes grew familiarised to Grecian forms and habits (especially in a matter of this kind, where so much depends upon the imagination); and if those figures introduced with them a belief of such fables, as first gave them being, and dressed them out in their various attributes, it was natural then, and (I should think) necessary, to go

to the source itself, the Greek accounts of their own religion; but, to say the truth, I suspect he was little conversant in those books and that language; for he rarely quotes any but Lucian, an author that falls in every body's way, and who lived at the very extremity of that period he has set to his inquiries, later than any of the poets he has meddled with, and for that reason ought to have been regarded as but an indifferent authority; especially being a Syrian too. His book (as he says himself) is, I think, rather a beginning than a perfect work; but a beginning at the wrong end: for if any body should finish it by inquiring into the Greek mythology, as he proposes, it will be necessary to read it backward.

There are several little neglects, that one might have told him of, which I noted in reading it hastily; as page 311, a discourse about orange-trees, occasioned by Virgil's 'inter odoratum lauri nemus,' where he fancies the Roman laurus to be our laurel; though undoubtedly the bay-tree, which is *odoratum*, and (I believe) still called lauro, or alloro, at Rome; and that the 'malum medicum' in the Georgick is the orange; though Theophrastus, whence Virgil borrowed it, or even Pliny, whom he himself quotes, might convince him it is the cedrato which he has often tasted at Florence. Page 144 is an account of Domenichino's Cardinal Virtues, and a fling at the Jesuits, neither of which belong to them: the painting is in a church of the Barnabiti, dedicated to St. Carlo Borromeo, whose motto is *Humilitas*. Page 151, in a note, he says, the old Romans did not regard Fortune as a deity; though Servius Tullius (whom she was said to be in love with; nay, there was actually an affair between them) founded her temple in Foro Boario. By the way, her worship was Greek, and this king was educated in the family of Tarquinius Priscus, whose father was a Corinthian; so it is easy to conceive how early the

religion of Rome might be mixed with that of Greece, &c. &c.

Dr. Middleton has sent me to-day a book on the Roman Senate, the substance of a dispute between Lord Hervey and him, though it never interrupted *their* friendship, he says, and I dare say not.

LETTER VI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, March 1, 1747.

AS one ought to be particularly careful to avoid blunders in a compliment of condolence, it would be a sensible satisfaction to me (before I testify my sorrow, and the sincere part I take in your misfortune) to know for certain, who it is I lament. I knew Zara and Selima, (Selima, was it? or Fatima) or rather I knew them both together; for I cannot justly say which was which. Then as to your handsome cat, the name you distinguish her by, I am no less at a loss, as well knowing one's handsome cat is always the cat one likes best; or, if one be alive and the other dead, it is usually the latter that is the handsomest. Besides, if the point were never so clear, I hope you do not think me so ill-bred or so imprudent as to forfeit all my interest in the surviver: Oh no! I would rather seem to mistake, and imagine to be sure it must be the tabby one that had met with this sad accident. Till this affair is a little better determined, you will excuse me if I do not begin to cry;

'Tempus inane peto, requiem, spatiumque doloris.'

Which interval is the more convenient, as it gives

time to rejoice with you on your new honors *. This is only a beginning; I reckon next week we shall hear you are a Free-mason, or a Gormogon at least.—Heigh ho! I feel (as you to be sure have done long since) that I have very little to say, at least in prose. Somebody will be the better for it; I do not mean you, but your cat, feuë Mademoiselle Selime, whom I am about to immortalize for one week or fortnight, as follows †. * * * There's a poem for you; it is rather too long for an epitaph.

LETTER VII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Stoke, June 5, 1748.

YOUR friendship has interested itself in my affairs so naturally, that I cannot help troubling you a little with a detail of them. ‡ * * * * * * * * * And now, my dear Wharton, why must I tell you a

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* Mr. Walpole was about this time elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

† The reader need hardly be told, that the 4th ode in the collection of his Poems was inserted in the place of these asterisks. This letter (as some other slight ones have been) is printed chiefly to mark the date of one of his compositions.

‡ The paragraph here omitted contained an account of Mr. Gray's loss of a house by fire in Cornhill, and the expense he should be at in rebuilding it. Though it was insured, he could at this time ill bear to lay out the additional sum necessary for the purpose.

thing so contrary to my own wishes and yours? I believe it is impossible for me to see you in the North, or to enjoy any of those agreeable hours I had flattered myself with. This business will oblige me to be in town several times during the summer, particularly in August, when half the money is to be paid; besides the good people here would think me the most careless and ruinous of mortals, if I should take such a journey at this time. The only satisfaction I can pretend to, is that of hearing from you, and particularly at this time when I was bid to expect the good news of an increase of your family. Your opinion of Diodorus is doubtless right; but there are things in him very curious, got out of better authorities now lost. Do you remember the Egyptian history, and particularly the account of the gold mines? My own readings have been cruelly interrupted: what I have been highly pleased with, is the new comedy from Paris by Gresset, called le Mechant; if you have it not, buy his works all together in two little volumes: they are collected by the Dutch booksellers, and consequently contain some trash; but then there are the Ververt, the Epistle to P. Bougeant, the Chartreuse, that to his sister, an Ode on his Country, and another on Mediocrity, and the Sidnei, another comedy, all which have great beauties. There is also a poem lately published by Thomson, called the Castle of Indolence, with some good stanzas in it. Mr. Mason is my acquaintance; I liked that Ode * much, but

* Ode to a Water Nymph, published about this time in Dodsley's Miscellany. On reading what follows, many readers, I suspect, will think me as simple as ever, in forbearing to expunge the paragraph: but as I publish Mr. Gray's sentiments of authors, as well living as dead, without reserve, I should do them injustice, if I was more scrupulous with respect to myself. My friends, I am sure,

have found no one else that did. He has much fancy, little judgment, and a good deal of modesty; I take him for a good and well-meaning creature; but then he is really in simplicity a child, and loves every body he meets with: he reads little or nothing; writes abundance, and that with a design to make his fortune by it. My best compliments to Mrs. Wharton and your family: does that name include any body I am not yet acquainted with?

LETTER VIII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Stoke, August 19, 1748.

I AM glad you have had any pleasure in Gresset; he seems to me a truly elegant and charming writer: the Mechant is the best comedy I ever read; his Edward I could scarce get through; it is puerile; though there are good lines, such as this for example:

'Le jour d'un nouveau regne est le jour des ingrats.'

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will be much amused with this and another passage hereafter of a like sort. My enemies, if they please, may sneer at it; and say (which they will very truly) that twenty-five years have made a very considerable abatement in my general philanthropy. Men of the world will not blame me for writing from so prudent a motive, as that of making my fortune by it; and yet the truth, I believe, at the time was, that I was perfectly well satisfied, if my publications furnished me with a few guineas to see a play or an opera.

But good lines will make any thing rather than a good play: however you are to consider this as a collection made up by the Dutch booksellers; many things unfinished, or written in his youth, or designed not for the world, but to make his friends laugh, as the Lutrin vivant, &c. There are two noble lines, which, as they are in the middle of an Ode to the King, may perhaps have escaped you:

'Le cri d'un peuple heureux est la seule eloquence,
Qui sçait parler des rois.'

Which is very true, and should have been a hint to himself not to write odes to the king at all.

As I have nothing more to say at present, I fill my paper with the beginning of an Essay; what name to give it I know not; but the subject is the Alliance of Education and Government: I mean to show that they must both concur to produce great and useful men. I desire your judgment upon it before I proceed any further.

The first fifty-seven verses of an Ethical Essay accompanied this letter, which I shall here insert, with about fifty lines more, all of them finished in his highest manner. Had this noble design been completed, I may, with great boldness, assert that it would have been one of the most capital poems of the kind that ever appeared either in our own, or any language. I am not able to inform the reader how many essays he meant to write upon the subject; nor do I believe that he had ever so far settled his plan as to determine that point: but since his theme was as extensive as human nature, (an observation he himself makes in a subsequent

letter on the 'Esprit des Loix') it is plain the whole work would have been considerable in point of size. He was busily employed in it at the time when M. de Montesquieu's book was first published: on reading it, he said the Baron had forestalled some of his best thoughts; and yet the reader will find, from the small fragment he has left, that the two writers differ a little in one very material point, viz. the influence of soil and climate on national manners*. Some time time after he had thoughts of resuming his plan, and of dedicating it, by an introductory ode, to M. de Montesquieu; but that great man's death, which happened in 1775, made him drop his design finally.

On carefully reviewing the scattered papers in prose, which he writ, as hints for his own use in the prosecution of this work, I think it best to form part of them into a kind of commentary at the bottom of the pages; they will serve greatly to elucidate (as far as they go) the method of his reasoning.

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* See L'Esprit des Loix, Liv. 14. chap. 2, &c.

ESSAY I.

—— Πόταγ' ὦ γαθέ; τὰν γὰρ ἀοιδὰν
Οὔτι πω εἰς Αἴδαν γε τὸν ἐκλελάθοντα φυλαξεῖς.
THEOCRITUS.

AS sickly plants betray a niggard earth,
Whose barren bosom starves her gen'rous birth,
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins:
And as in climes, where Winter holds his reign,
The soil, though fertile, will not teem in vain,

COMMENTARY.

The author's subject being (as we have seen) *The necessary Alliance between a good Form of Government and a good Mode of Education, in order to produce the Happiness of Mankind*, the poem opens with two similes; an uncommon kind of exordium: but which, I suppose, the poet intentionally chose, to intimate the analogical method he meant to pursue in his subsequent reasonings. 1st, He asserts that men without education are like sickly plants in a cold or barren soil, (line 1 to

NOTES.

[*As sickly plants*, &c. l. 1.] If any copies of this Essay would have authorised me to have made an alteration in the disposition of the lines, I would,

Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,
Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies:
So draw mankind in vain the vital airs,
Unform'd, unfriended, by those kindly cares,
That health and vigour to the soul impart,
Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart:
So fond Instruction on the growing powers
Of nature idly lavishes her stores,

COMMENTARY.

5, and 8 to 12); and, 2dly, he compares them, when unblest with a just and well-regulated government, to plants that will not blossom or bear fruit in an unkindly and inclement air (l. 5 to 9, and l. 13 to

NOTES.

for the sake of perspicuity, have printed the first twelve in the following manner; because I think the poetry would not have been in the least hurt by such a transposition, and the poet's meaning would have been much more readily perceived. I put them down here for that purpose.

As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,
Whose barren bosom starves her gen'rous birth,
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins:
So draw mankind in vain the vital airs,
Unform'd, unfriended by those kindly cares,
That health and vigour to the soul impart,
Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart.
And as in climes, where Winter holds his reign,
The soil, though fertile, will not teem in vain,
Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,
Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies:
So fond Instruction, &c.

If equal Justice with unclouded face
Smile not indulgent on the rising race,
And scatter with a free, though frugal hand
Light golden showers of plenty o'er the land:
But Tyranny has fix'd her empire there,
To check their tender hopes with chilling fear,
And blast the blooming promise of the year.
  This spacious animated scene survey,
From where the rolling orb, that gives the day,
His sable sons with nearer course surrounds
To either pole, and life's remotest bounds.
How rude soe'er th' exterior form we find,
Howe'er opinion tinge the varied mind,
Alike, to all the kind, impartial Heav'n
The sparks of truth and happiness has giv'n:
With sense to feel, with memory to retain,
They follow pleasure, and they fly from pain;
Their judgment mends the plan their fancy draws,
Th' event presages, and explores the cause;
The soft returns of gratitude they know,
By fraud elude, by force repel the foe;
While mutual wishes, mutual woes endear
The social smile and sympathetic tear.
  Say, then, through ages by what fate confined
To different climes seem different souls assign'd?

COMMENTARY.

22.) Having thus laid down the two propositions he means to prove, he begins by examining into the characteristics which (taking a general view of mankind) all men have in common one with another (l. 22 to 39); they covet pleasure and avoid pain (l. 31); they feel gratitude for benefits (l. 34); they desire to avenge wrongs, which they effect either by force or cunning (l. 35); they are linked to each other by their common feelings, and participate in sorrow and in joy (l. 36, 37). If then all the human species agree in so many moral particulars, whence arises the diversity of national

Here measured laws and philosophic ease
Fix, and improve the polish'd arts of peace.
There industry and gain their vigils keep,
Command the winds, and tame th' unwilling deep.
Here force and hardy deeds of blood prevail;
There languid pleasure sighs in every gale.
Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar
Has Scythia breathed the living cloud of war;

COMMENTARY.

characters? This question the poet puts at line 38, and dilates upon it to l. 64. Why, says he, have some nations shown a propensity to commerce and industry; others to war and rapine; others to ease and pleasure? (l. 42 to 46.) Why have the

NOTES.

[*Has Scythia breathed*, &c. l. 47.] The most celebrated of the early irruptions of the Scythians into the neighbouring countries is that under the conduct of Madyes, about the year of the creation 3350, when they broke into Asia, during the reign of Cyaxares, king of the Medes, and conqueror of the Assyrians, plundered it at discretion, and kept possession of it during twenty-eight years. Many successive incursions, attended with every kind of desolation, are enumerated by historians; particularly those, in A.D. 252, during the reign of Gallus and Volusianus, and in 261, under that of Gallienus. Under the Greek emperors also, to mention only the years 1053 and 1191, it appears that the Scythians still continued their accustomed ravages. In later times, the like spirit of sudden and destructive invasion has constantly prevailed; and these same Scythians, under their modern name of Tartars, have, at different periods, overrun Asia, and even some parts of Europe: it is

And, where the deluge burst, with sweepy sway
Their arms, their kings, their gods were roll'd away.
As oft have issued, host impelling host,
The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast.
The prostrate South to the destroyer yields
Her boasted titles and her golden fields:

COMMENTARY.

Northern people overspread, in all ages, and prevailed over the Southern? (l. 46 to 58.) Why has Asia been, time out of mind, the seat of despotism,

NOTES.

sufficient, on this point, to recall to the reader's memory the name of Gingis-Chan, Octaï, and Tamerlane.

[*The blue-eyed myriads*, &c. l. 51.] The different nations of Germans, who inhabited or bordered on this coast, have been always distinguished by their various emigrations in search of a better soil and climate, and of a more commodious settlement. The reader will readily recollect the expedition of the Teutones, who joined the Cimbri, when they invaded the Roman territories to the united amount, it is said, of 300,000 fighting men; the many inroads of the Germans into Gaul, under the conduct of Ariovistus; and the numerous irruptions, into the Roman empire, of the Suevi, the Goths, the Vandals, and lastly of the Lombards; most of which nations came originally from the coasts here mentioned. The epithet 'blue-eyed' exhibits a distinguishing feature of the ancient Germans; and is particularly remarked by Tacitus and Juvenal. 'Truces et cærulei oculi,' observes the former, 'de Popul. German.' cap. 4.; and the latter, 'Cærula quis stupuit Germani lumina?' Sat. 13. ver. 164.

With grim delight the Brood of winter view
A brighter day, and heavens of azure hue,
Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,
And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.
Proud of the yoke, and pliant to the rod,
Why yet does Asia dread a monarch's nod,
While European freedom still withstands
Th' encroaching tide, that drowns her lessening lands;
And sees far off with an indignant groan
Her native plains, and empires once her own.
Can opener skies and suns of fiercer flame
O'erpower the fire, that animates our frame;

COMMENTARY.

and Europe that of freedom? (l. 54 to 64.) Are we from these instances to imagine men necessarily enslaved to the inconveniences of the climate where

NOTES.

[*With grim delight*, &c. l. 54.] It may not be improper here, after admiring the noble vein of poetical expression and imagery which adorns this description, to relate an incident in itself curious, which shows the propriety of it. The Normans, who came originally from Norway and Scandinavia, having, after a century of ravages, settled themselves in Neustria (since called Normandy) in 912, were invited into the southern parts of Italy, in the year 1018, by Gaimar, prince of Salerno. The ambassadors, by his particular direction, carried with them a quantity of citrons, and of other rare fruits, as the most alluring proof of the mildness of the climate. He thought (and the event showed he was right in thinking so) that this 'Brood of winter,' delighted with the taste and fragrance of these delicacies, would the more readily consent to his proposal. [See Leo Ostiensis in his 'Chron.

As lamps, that shed at eve a cheerful ray,
Fade and expire beneath the eye of day?
Need we the influence of the northern star
To string our nerves and steel our hearts to war?
And, where the face of nature laughs around,
Must sick'ning virtue fly the tainted ground?
Unmanly thought! what seasons can control,
What fancied zone can circumscribe the soul,
Who, conscious of the source from whence she springs,
By reason's light, on resolution's wings,
Spite of her frail companion, dauntless goes
O'er Lybia's deserts and through Zembla's snows?
She bids each slumb'ring energy awake,
Another touch, another temper take,
Suspends th' inferior laws, that rule our clay:
The stubborn elements confess her sway;
Their little wants, their low desires, refine,
And raise the mortal to a height divine.
Not but the human fabric from the birth
Imbibes a flavour of its parent earth.
As various tracts enforce a various toil,
The manners speak the idiom of their soil.

COMMENTARY.

they were born? (l. 64 to 72.) Or are we not rather to suppose there is a natural strength in the human mind, that is able to vanquish and break through them? (l. 72 to 84.) It is confessed, however, that men receive an early tincture from the situation

NOTES.

Cassin.' and Petavius, 'Rationarium Temp.' pars. prim. lib. viii.] Mr. Gray's judgment, in what remains to us of this essay, is very remarkable. He borrows from poetry his imagery, his similes, and his expressions; but his thoughts are taken, as the nature of the poem requires, from history and observation.

An iron race the mountain-cliffs maintain,
Foes to the gentler genius of the plain:
For where unwearied sinews must be found
With side-long plough to quell the flinty ground,
To turn the torrent's swift-descending flood,
To brave the savage rushing from the wood,
What wonder, if to patient valour train'd
They guard with spirit, what by strength they gain'd?
And while their rocky ramparts round they see,
The rough abode of want and liberty,
(As lawless force from confidence will grow)
Insult the plenty of the vales below?

COMMENTARY.

they are placed in, and the climate which produces them (l. 84 to 88). Thus the inhabitants of the mountains, inured to labour and patience, are naturally trained to war (l. 88 to 96); while those of the plain are more open to any attack, and softened by ease and plenty (l. 96 to 99). Again, the Egyptians, from the nature of their situation, might be the inventors of home-navigation, from a necessity of keeping up an intercourse between their towns during the inundation of the Nile (l. 99 to ******). Those persons would naturally have the first turn to commerce, who inhabited a barren coast like the Tyrians, and were persecuted by some neighbouring tyrant; or were drove to take refuge on some shoals, like the Venetian and Hollander; their discovery of some rich island, in the infancy of the world, described. The Tartar, hardened to war by his rigorous climate and pastoral life, and by his disputes for water and herbage in a country without land-marks, as also by skirmishes between his rival clans, was consequently fitted to conquer his rich Southern neighbours, whom ease and luxury had enervated: yet this is no proof that liberty and valour may not exist in southern climes,

What wonder, in the sultry climes, that spread,
Where Nile redundant o'er his summer-bed

COMMENTARY.

since the Syrians and Carthaginians gave noble instances of both; and the Arabians carried their conquests as far as the Tartars. Rome also (for many centuries) repulsed those very nations, which, when she grew weak, at length demolished* her extensive empire.* * * *

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* The reader will perceive that the commentary goes further than the text. The reason for which is, that the editor found it so on the paper from which he formed that comment; and as the thoughts seemed to be those which Mr. Gray would have next graced with the harmony of his numbers, he held it best to give them in continuation. There are other maxims on different papers, all apparently relating to the same subject, which are too excellent to be lost; these therefore (as the place in which he meant to employ them cannot be ascertained) I shall subjoin to this note, under the title of detached sentiments.

'Man is a creature not capable of cultivating his mind but in society, and in that only where he is not a slave to the necessities of life.

'Want is the mother of the inferior arts, but Ease that of the finer; as eloquence, policy, morality, poetry, sculpture, painting, architecture, which are the improvements of the former.

'The climate inclines some nations to contemplation and pleasure; others to hardship, action, and war; but not so as to incapacitate the former for courage and discipline, or the latter for civility, politeness, and works of genius.

'It is the proper work of education and govern-

From his broad bosom life and verdure flings,
And broods o'er Egypt with his wat'ry wings,

NOTES.

[*And broods o'er Egypt*, &c. l. 103.] The image seems to be taken from the figure of Jupiter Pluvius, as represented on the Antonine Pillar. But the whole passage rises to a height beyond the powers either of sculpture or painting to ascend. The critic would, with difficulty, find any description in antiquity, which exceeds this in point of true sublimity.

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ment united to redress the faults that arise from the soil and air.

'The principal drift of education should be to make men *think* in the northern climates, and *act* in the southern.

'The different steps and degrees of education may be compared to the artificer's operations upon marble; it is one thing to dig it out of the quarry, and another to square it; to give it gloss and lustre, call forth every beautiful spot and vein, shape it into a column, or animate it into a statue.

'To a native of free and happy governments his country is always dear:

'He loves his old hereditary trees.'—COWLEY.

While the subject of a tyrant has no country; he is therefore selfish and base-minded; he has no family, no posterity, no desire of fame; or, if he has, of one that turns not on its proper object.

'Any nation that wants public spirit, neglects education, ridicules the desire of fame, and even of virtue and reason, must be ill governed.

'Commerce changes entirely the fate and genius of nations, by communicating arts and opinions, circulating money, and introducing the materials of luxury; she first opens and polishes the mind,

If with advent'rous oar and ready sail
The dusky people drive before the gale; 105

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then corrupts and enervates both that and the body.

'Those invasions of effeminate southern nations by the warlike northern people seem (in spite of all the terror, mischief, and ignorance which they brought with them) to be necessary evils; in order to revive the spirit of mankind, softened and broken by the arts of commerce, to restore them to their native liberty and equality, and to give them again the power of supporting danger and hardship; so a comet, with all the horrors that attend it as it passes through our system, brings a supply of warmth and light to the sun, and of moisture to the air.

'The doctrine of Epicurus is ever ruinous to society: it had its rise when Greece was declining, and perhaps hastened its dissolution, as also that of Rome; it is now propagated in France and in England, and seems likely to produce the same effect in both.

'One principal characteristic of vice in the present age is the contempt of fame.

'Many are the uses of good fame to a generous mind: it extends our existence and example into future ages; continues and propagates virtue, which otherwise would be as short-lived as our frame; and prevents the prevalence of vice in a generation more corrupt even than our own. It is impossible to conquer that natural desire we have of being remembered; even criminal ambition and avarice, the most selfish of all passions, would wish to leave a name behind them.'

I find also among these papers a single couplet much too beautiful to be lost, though the place where he meant to introduce it cannot be ascertained; it must, however, have made a part of

Or on frail floats to neighb'ring cities ride,
That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide.

* * * * * * *

NOTES.

[*That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide*, l. 107.] The foregoing account of the river Nile, while it is embellished with all the graces of description, is given at the same time in exact conformity to truth and reality; as the reader will observe from the following citation: 'Le Nil portoit par tout la fécondité avec ses eaux salutaires, unissoit les villes entre elles, et la grande mer avec la Mer Rouge, entretenoit le commerce au dedans et au dehors du royaume, et le fortifioit contre l'ennemi: de sorte qu'il étoit tout ensemble et le nourricier, et le defenseur de l'Egypte. On lui abandonnoit la campagne: mais les villes, rehaussées avec des travaux immenses, et s'élevant comme des iles au milieu des eaux, regardoient avec joye de cette hauteur toute la plaine inondée et tout ensemble fertilisée par le Nil.' *Bossuet, Disc. sur l'Hist. trois. part.*

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some description of the effect which the reformation had on our national manners:

When love could teach a monarch to be wise,
And gospel-light first dawn'd from BULLEN'S eyes.

Thus, with all the attention that a connoisseur in painting employs in collecting every slight outline as well as finished drawing which led to the completion of some capital picture, I have endeavoured to preserve every fragment of this great poetical design. It surely deserved this care, as it was one of the noblest which Mr. Gray ever attempted; and also, as far as he carried it into execution, the most exquisitely finished. That he carried it no further is, and must ever be, a most sensible loss to the republic of letters.

LETTER IX.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, March 9, 1748-9.

YOU ask for some account of books. The principal I can tell you of is a work of the President Montesquieu, the labour of twenty years; it is called L'Esprit des Loix, 2 vol. 4to. printed at Geneva. He lays down the principles on which are founded the three sorts of government, despotism, the limited monarchy, and the republican; and shows how from these are deduced the laws and customs by which they are guided and maintained; the education proper to each form; the influence of climate, situation, religion, &c. on the minds of particular nations and on their policy. The subject, you see, is as extensive as mankind; the thoughts perfectly new, generally admirable as they are just, sometimes a little too refined. In short, there are faults, but such as an ordinary man could never have committed. The style very lively and concise (consequently sometimes obscure); it is the gravity of Tacitus, whom he admires, tempered with the gaiety and fire of a Frenchman. The time of night will not suffer me to go on; but I will write again in a week.

LETTER X.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, April 25, 1749.

I PERCEIVE that second parts are as bad to write as they can be to read; for this, which you ought to have had a week after the first, has been a full month in coming forth. The spirit of laziness (the spirit of the place) begins to possess even me, who have so long declaimed against it; yet has it not so prevailed, but that I feel that discontent with myself, that ennui, that ever accompanies it in its beginnings. Time will settle my conscience; time will reconcile me to this languid companion: we shall smoke, we shall tipple, we shall doze together: we shall have our little jokes like other people, and our old stories: brandy will finish what port began; and a month after the time you will see in some corner of a London Evening Post, 'Yesterday died the Reverend Mr. John Gray, Senior Fellow of Clare-Hall, a facetious companion, and well respected by all that knew him. His death is supposed to have been occasioned by a fit of an apoplexy, being found fallen out of bed with his head in the chamber-pot.'

In the meanwhile, to go on with my account of new books. Montesquieu's work, which I mentioned before, is now publishing anew in 2 vols. 8vo. Have you seen old Crebillon's Catilina, a tragedy, which has had a prodigious run at Paris? Historical truth is too much perverted in it, which is ridiculous in a story so generally known; but if you can get over this, the sentiments and versification are fine, and most of the characters (particularly the principal one) painted with great spirit.

Mr. Birch, the indefatigable, has just put out a

thick octavo of original papers of Queen Elizabeth's time; there are many curious things in it, particularly letters from Sir Robert Cecil (Salisbury) about his negotiations with Henry IV. of France, the Earl of Monmouth's odd account of Queen Elizabeth's death, several peculiarities of James I. and Prince Henry, &c. and above all, an excellent account of the state of France, with characters of the king, his court, and ministry, by Sir George Carew, ambassador there. This, I think, is all new worth mentioning, that I have seen or heard of; except a Natural History of Peru, in Spanish, printed at London, by Don ——— something, a man of learning, sent thither by that court on purpose.

You ask after my chronology. It was begun, as I told you, almost two years ago, when I was in the midst of Diogenes Laertius and his Philosophers, as a proemium to their works. My intention in forming this table was not so much for public events, though these too have a column assigned them, but rather in a literary way to compare the time of all great men, their writings and their transactions. I have brought it from the 30th Olympiad, where it begins, to the 113th; that is, 332 years*. My only modern assistants were Marsham, Dodwell, and Bentley.

I have since that read Pausanias and Athenæus all through, and Æschylus again. I am now in Pindar and Lysias; for I take verse and prose together like bread and cheese.

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* This laborious work was formed much in the manner of the President Henault's 'Histoire de France.' Every page consisted of nine columns; one for the Olympiad, the next for the Archons, the third for the public affairs of Greece, the three next for the Philosophers, and the three last for Poets, Historians, and Orators. I do not find it carried further than the date above-mentioned.

LETTER XI.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, August 8, 1749.

I PROMISED Dr. Keene long since to give you an account of our magnificences here*; but the newspapers and he himself in person have got the start of my indolence, so that by this time you are well acquainted with all the events that adorned that week of wonders. Thus much I may venture to tell you, because it is probable nobody else has done it, that our friend * *'s zeal and eloquence surpassed all power of description. Vesuvio in an eruption was not more violent than his utterance, nor (since I am at my mountains) Pelion, with all its pine-trees in a storm of wind, more impetuous than his action; and yet the Senate-house still stands, and (I thank God) we are all safe and well at your service. I was ready to sink for him, and scarce dared to look about me, when I was sure it was all over; but soon found I might have spared my confusion; all people joined to applaud him. Every thing was quite right; and I dare swear not three people here but think him a model of oratory; for all the Duke's little court came with a resolution to be pleased; and when the tone was once given, the university, who ever wait for the judgment of their betters, struck into it with an admirable harmony: for the rest of the performances, they were just what they usually are. Every one, while it lasted, was very gay and very busy in

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* The Duke of Newcastle's installation as Chancellor of the University.

the morning, and very owlish and very tipsy at night: I make no exceptions from the Chancellor to Blue-coat. Mason's Ode was the only entertainment that had any tolerable elegance; and, for my own part, I think it (with some little abatements) uncommonly well on such an occasion. Pray let me know your sentiments; for doubtless you have seen it. The author of it grows apace into my good graces, as I know him more; he is very ingenious, with great good-nature and simplicity; a little vain, but in so harmless and so comical a way, that it does not offend one at all; a little ambitious, but with all so ignorant in the world and its ways, that this does not hurt him in one's opinion; so sincere and so undisguised, that no mind, with a spark of generosity, would ever think of hurting him, he lies so open to injury; but so indolent, that if he cannot overcome this habit, all his good qualities will signify nothing at all. After all, I like him so well, I could wish you knew him.

LETTER XII.

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER.

Cambridge, Nov. 7, 1749.

THE unhappy news I have just received from you equally surprises and afflicts me*. I have lost a

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* The death of his aunt, Mrs. Mary Antrobus, who died the 5th of November, and was buried in a vault in Stoke church-yard near the chancel

person I loved very much, and have been used to from my infancy; but am much more concerned for your loss, the circumstances of which I forbear to dwell upon, as you must be too sensible of them yourself; and will, I fear, more and more need a consolation that no one can give, except He who has preserved her to you so many years, and at last, when it was his pleasure, has taken her from us to himself: and perhaps, if we reflect upon what she felt in this life, we may look upon this as an instance of his goodness both to her, and to those that loved her. She might have languished many years before our eyes in a continual increase of pain, and totally helpless; she might have long wished to end her misery without being able to attain it; or perhaps even lost all sense, and yet continued to breathe; a sad spectacle to such as must have felt more for her than she could have done for herself. However you may deplore your own loss, yet think that she is at last easy and happy; and has now more occasion to pity us than we her. I hope, and beg, you will support yourself with that resignation we owe to him, who gave us our being for our good, and who deprives us of it for the same reason. I would have come to you directly, but you do not say whether you desire I should or not; if you do, I beg I may know it, for there is nothing to hinder me, and I am in very good health.

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door, in which also his mother and himself (according to the direction in his will) were afterwards buried.

LETTER XIII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Stoke, August 9, 1750.

ARISTOTLE says (one may write Greek to you without scandal) that Οἱ τοποι οὐ διαλύουσι τὴν Φιλίαν ἁπλῶς, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν· ἐὰν δέ χρόνιος ἡ ἀπουσία γένηται καὶ τῆς Φιλίας δοκεῖ λήθην ποιεῖν. ὅθεν ἔιρηται

Πολλὰς δὴ Φιλίας ἀπροσηγορία διέλυσεν.

But Aristotle may say whatever he pleases, I do not find myself at all the worse for it. I could indeed wish to refresh my Ἐνέργεια a little at Durham by the sight of you, but when is there a probability of my being so happy? It concerned me greatly when I heard the other day that your asthma continued at times to afflict you, and that you were often obliged to go into the country to breathe; you cannot oblige me more than by giving me an account both of the state of your body and mind: I hope the latter is able to keep you cheerful and easy in spite of the frailties of its companion. As to my own, it can neither do one nor the other; and I have the mortification to find my spiritual part the most infirm thing about me. You have doubtless heard of the loss I have had in Dr. Middleton, whose house was the only easy place one could find to converse in at Cambridge: for my part I find a friend so uncommon a thing, that I cannot help regretting even an old acquaintance, which is an indifferent likeness of it; and though I do not approve the spirit of his books,

methinks 'tis pity the world should lose so rare a thing as a good writer*.

My studies cannot furnish a recommendation of many new books to you. There is a defence 'de l'Esprit des Loix,' by Montesquieu himself; it has some lively things in it, but is very short, and his adversary appears to be so mean a bigot that he deserved no answer. There are 3 vols. in 4to. of 'Histoire du Cabinet du Roy, by Messrs. Buffons and d'Aubenton;' the first is a man of character, but I am told has hurt it by this work. It is all a sort of introduction to natural history: the weak part of it is a love of system which runs through it; the most contrary thing in the world to a science entirely grounded upon experiments, and which has nothing to do with vivacity† of imagination. However I cannot help commending the general view which he gives of the face of the earth, followed by a particular one of all the known nations, their peculiar figure and manners, which is the best epitome of geography I ever met with, and written with sense and elegance; in short, these books are well worth turning over. The Memoirs of the Abbé de Mongon, in 5 vols. are highly commended, but I have not seen them. He was engaged in several embassies to Germany, England, &c. during the course of the late war. The President Henault's 'Abregè Chronologique de l'Histoire de France," I believe I have before mentioned to you as a very good book of its kind.

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* Mr. Gray used to say, that good writing not only required great parts, but the very best of those parts.

† One cannot therefore help lamenting, that Mr. Gray let his imagination lie dormant so frequently, in order to apply himself to this very science.

About this time Mr. Gray had put his last hand to his celebrated Elegy in the Country Church-yard, and had communicated it to his friend Mr. Walpole, whose good taste was too much charmed with it to suffer him to withhold the sight of it from his acquaintance; accordingly it was shown about for some time in manuscript, (as Mr. Gray intimates in the subsequent letter to Dr. Wharton) and received with all the applause it so justly merited. Amongst the rest of the fashionable world, for to these only it was at present communicated, Lady Cobham, who now lived at the mansion-house at Stoke-Pogis, had read and admired it. She wished to be acquainted with the author; accordingly her relation Miss Speed and Lady Schaub, then at her house, undertook to bring this about by making him the first visit. He happened to be from home, when the ladies arrived at his aunt's solitary mansion; and, when he returned, was surprised to find, written on one of his papers in the parlour where he usually read, the following note: 'Lady Schaub's compliments to Mr. Gray; she is sorry not to have found him at home, to tell him that Lady Brown is very well.' This necessarily obliged him to return the visit, and soon after induced him to compose a ludicrous account of this little adventure, for the amusement of the ladies in question. He wrote it in ballad measure, and entitled it a Long Story: when it was handed about in manuscript, nothing could be more various than the opinions concerning it; by some it was thought a master-piece of original humour, by others a wild and fantastic farrago; and when it was published, the sentiments of good judges were equally divided about it. How it came to be printed I shall mention hereafter; and also inform the reader why Mr. Gray rejected it in the collection which he himself made of his Poems: in the meanwhile, as I think it ought to have a place in these Memoirs, for reasons too ob-

vious to insist upon, I shall beg leave to preface it with my own idea of the author's peculiar vein of humour; which, with my notes on the piece itself, may perhaps account in some sort for the variety of opinions which people of acknowledged taste have formed concerning it.

Mr. Gray had not (in my opinion) either in his conversation or writing much of what is called *pure* humour; it was always so much blended either with wit, fancy, or his own peculiar character, that it became equivocal, and hence not adapted to please generally: it had more of the manner of Congreve than Addison; and we know where one person relishes my Lady Wishfort, there are thousands that admire Sir Roger de Coverley: it will not however from hence follow, that Lady Wishfort is ill drawn; for my own part I think it one of the most entertaining characters that ever was written. I know, however, that it is commonly thought extravagant and unnatural; and I believe it is true, that no woman ever existed who had so much folly and affectation, and at the same time so much wit and fancy; yet every one sees that were this fancy and wit taken away, her character would become insipid, in proportion as it became more natural; so that, in this and other instances, *if Congreve's fools were fools indeed*, they would, by being *true* characters, cease to be *entertaining* ones. It may be further observed on the subject of humour, that it may and ought to be divided into several species: there is one sort, that of Terence's, which simply pleases without forcing a smile; another, like Mr. Addison's, which not only pleases, but makes us smile into the bargain. Shakspeare's, Swift's, Congreve's, and Prior's usually goes further, and makes us laugh: I infer not from hence that this latter sort is the best: I only assert, that howsoever it may be mixed with other ingredients, it ought also to be called humour. The critic, however, who judges by rule, and who will not be pleased

unless legitimately, will be apt to condemn this species of mixed humour; and the common reader will not always have either wit or imagination enough to comprehend or taste it. But I have said Mr. Gray not only mixed wit and fancy with his humour, but also his own particular character; and being naturally delicate, and at times even fastidious, his humour generally took the same cast; and would therefore be only relished by such of his friends, as, conscious of his superior excellencies, thought this defect not only pardonable but entertaining, which a character of this sort (being humorous in itself) always is, when it is not carried to any offensive extreme. Yet, as this observation relates only to his conversation and familiar letters, (for to these only it can be applied) I have no occasion to insist on it further; and shall only add, that whatever the generality of readers may think of Mr. Gray's talent in this way, there will always be some, and those far from the lowest class, to whom it will appear excellent: for humour may be true, when it ceases to be pure or unmixed, if the ingredients which go to its composition be true also. False wit and wild fancy would debase the best humour in the world, as they frequently do in Rabelais and Sterne (without taking more exceptionable matters into consideration); but when genuine, they serve to heighten and embellish it.

A LONG STORY.

IN Britain's isle, no matter where,
* An ancient pile of building stands:
The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employ'd the pow'r of fairy hands

To raise the ceiling's fretted height,
Each pannel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages, that lead to nothing.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
† My grave lord-keeper led the brawls;
The seal and maces danced before him.

His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,
His high-crown'd hat, and satin doublet,
Moved the stout heart of England's queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

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* The mansion-house at Stoke-Pogis, then in the possession of Viscountess Cobham. The style of building, which we now call Queen Elizabeth's, is here admirably described, both with regard to its beauties and defects; and the third and fourth stanzas delineate the fantastic manners of her time with equal truth and humour. The house formerly belonged to the Earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton.

† Sir Christopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing. G.—Brawls were a sort of figure-dance, then in vogue, and probably deemed as elegant as our modern cotillions, or still more modern quadrilles.

What, in the very first beginning!
Shame of the versifying tribe!
Your hist'ry whither are you spinning!
Can you do nothing but describe?

A house there is (and that's enough)
From whence one fatal morning issues
* A brace of warriors, not in buff,
But rustling in their silks and tissues.

The first came cap-à-pie from France,
Her conqu'ring destiny fulfilling,
Whom meaner beauties eye askance,
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other amazon kind heaven
Had arm'd with spirit, wit, and satire:
But Cobham had the polish giv'n,
And tipp'd her arrows with good-nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air——
Coarse panegyrics would but tease her.
Melissa is her *Nom de Guerre.*
Alas, who would not wish to please her!

With bonnet blue and capuchine,
And aprons long they hid their armour,
And veil'd their weapons bright and keen
In pity to the country farmer.

Fame in the shape of † Mr. P—t
(By this time all the parish know it)

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* The reader is already apprised who these ladies were: the two descriptions are prettily contrasted; and nothing can be more happily turned than the compliment to Lady Cobham in the eighth stanza.

† I have been told that this gentleman, a neighbour and acquaintance of Mr. Gray's in the country, was much displeased at the liberty here taken with his name; yet, surely, without any great reason.

Had told, that thereabouts there lurk'd
A wicked imp they call a poet:

Who prowl'd the country far and near,
Bewitch'd the children of the peasants,
Dried up the cows, and lamed the deer,
And suck'd the eggs, and kill'd the pheasants.

My lady heard their joint petition,
Swore by her coronet and ermine,
She'd issue out her high commission
To rid the manor of such vermin.

The heroines undertook the task,
Through lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventured,
Rapp'd at the door, nor stay'd to ask,
But bounce into the parlour enter'd.

The trembling family they daunt,
They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle,
Rummage his mother, pinch his aunt,
And up stairs in a whirlwind rattle.

Each hole and cupboard they explore,
Each creek and cranny of his chamber,
Run hurry-skurry round the floor,
And o'er the bed and tester clamber;

Into the drawers and china pry,
Papers and books, a huge imbroglio!
Under a tea-cup he might lie,
Or creased, like dogs-ears, in a folio.

On the first marching of the troops,
The Muses, hopeless of his pardon,
Convey'd him underneath their hoops,
To a small closet in the garden.

So rumour says: (who will, believe.)
But that they left the door a-jar,
Where, safe and laughing in his sleeve,
He heard the distant din of war.

Short was his joy. He little knew
The pow'r of magic was no fable;
Out of the window, whisk, they flew,
* But left a spell upon the table.

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* Fancy is here so much blended with the humour, that I believe the two stanzas which succeed this line are among those which are the least relished by the generality. The description of the spell, I know, has appeared to many persons absolutely unintelligible; yet if the reader adverts to that peculiar idea which runs through the whole, I imagine the obscurity complained of will be removed. An incident, we see, so slight as the simple matter of fact, required something like machinery to enliven it: accordingly the author chose, with propriety enough, to employ for that purpose those notions of witchcraft, ghosts, and enchantment, which prevailed at the time when the mansion-house was built. He describes himself as a demon of the lowest class, *a wicked imp who lamed the deer*, &c. against whose malevolent power Lady Cobham (the Gloriana of the piece) employs two superior enchantresses. Congruity of imagery, therefore, required the card they left upon the table to be converted into a spell. Now all the old writers, on these subjects, are very minute in describing the materials of such talismans. Hence, therefore, his grotesque idea of a composition of transparent bird-lime, edged with invisible chains, in order to catch and draw him to the tribunal. Without going further for examples of this kind of imagery than the poet's own works, let me instance two passages of the serious kind, similar to this ludicrous one. In his ode, entitled the Bard,

'Above, below, the rose of snow,' &c.

And, again, in the Fatal Sisters,

'See the griesly texture grow.'

The words too eager to unriddle,
The poet felt a strange disorder:
Transparent bird-lime form'd the middle,
And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the apparatus,
The powerful pot-hooks did so move him,
That, will he, nill he, to the great-house
He went, as if the devil drove him.

* Yet on his way (no sign of grace,
For folks in fear are apt to pray)
To Phœbus he preferr'd his case,
And begg'd his aid that dreadful day.

The godhead would have back'd his quarrel;
But with a blush on recollection,
Own'd, that his quiver and his laurel
'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

The court was sate, the culprit there;
Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping
† The Lady Janes and Joans repair,
And from the gallery stand peeping:

It must, however, be allowed, that no person can fully relish this burlesque, who is not much conversant with the old romance-writers, and with the poets who formed themselves on their model.

* The humour of this and the following stanza is more pure, and consequently more obvious. It might have been written by Prior, and the wit at the end is much in his best manner.

† Here Fancy is again uppermost, and soars as high on her comic, as on another occasion she does on her lyric wing: for now a chorus of ghostly old women of quality come to give sentence on the culprit poet, just as the spirits of Cadwallo, Urien, and Hoel join the Bard in dreadful symphony to denounce vengeance on Edward I. The route of Fancy, we see, is the same both on the humorous

Such as in silence of the night
Come (sweep) along some winding entry,
* (Styack has often seen the sight)
Or at the chapel-door stand sentry:

† In peaked hoods and mantles tarnish'd,
Sour visages, enough to scare ye,
High dames of honour once, that garnish'd
The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary.

The peeress comes. The audience stare,
And doff their hats with due submission:
She curtsies, as she takes her chair,
To all the people of condition.

The bard, with many an artful fib,
Had in imagination fenced him,
Disproved the arguments of ‡ Squib,
And all that § Groom could urge against him.

But soon his rhetoric forsook him,
When he the solemn hall had seen;
A sudden fit of ague shook him,
He stood as mute as poor ‖ Macleane.

Yet something he was heard to mutter,
'How in the park beneath an old tree
(Without design to hurt the butter,
Or any malice to the poultry),

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and sublime occasion. No wonder, therefore, if either of them should fail of being generally tasted.

* The housekeeper. G.

† The description is here excellent, and I should think would please universally.

‡ Groom of the chamber. G.

§ The steward. G.

‖ A famous highwayman hanged the week before. G.—This stanza is of the sort where wit rather than fancy prevails, consequently much in Prior's manner.

He once or twice had penn'd a sonnet;
  Yet hoped, that he might save his bacon:
Numbers would give their oaths upon it,
  He ne'er was for a conj'rer taken.'

The ghostly prudes with * hagged face
  Already had condemn'd the sinner.
My lady rose, and with a grace——
  † She smiled, and bid him come to dinner.

'Jesu-Maria! Madam Bridget,
  Why, what can the viscountess mean?
(Cried the square-hoods in woful fidget)
  The times are alter'd quite and clean!

'Decorum's turn'd to mere civility;
  Her air and all her manners show it.
Commend me to her affability!
  Speak to a commoner and poet!'

[*Here* 500 *stanzas are lost.*]

And so God save our noble king,
  And guard us from long-winded lubbers,
That to eternity would sing,
  And keep my lady from her rubbers.

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* Hagged, *i. e.* the face of a witch or hag; the epithet hagârd has been sometimes mistaken, as conveying the same idea; but it means a very different thing, viz. wild and farouche, and is taken from an unreclaimed hawk, called an hagard; in which its proper sense the poet uses it finely on a sublime occasion:

Cloth'd in the sable garb of woe,
With hagard eyes the poet stood.
Vide Ode 6th.

† Here the story finishes; the exclamation of the ghosts which follows is characteristic of the Spanish manners of the age when they are supposed to have lived; and the 500 stanzas, said to be lost, may be imagined to contain the remainder of their long-winded expostulation.

LETTER XIV.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Dec. 17, 1750.

OF my house I cannot say much *, I wish I could; but for my heart it is no less yours than it has long been; and the last thing in the world that will throw it into tumults is a fine lady. The verses, you so kindly try to keep in countenance, were written merely to divert Lady Cobham and her family, and succeeded accordingly; but being showed about in town are not liked there at all. Mrs. * * *, a very fashionable personage, told Mr. Walpole that she had seen a thing by a friend of his which she did not know what to make of, for it aimed at every thing, and meant nothing; to which he replied, that he had always taken her for a woman of sense, and was very sorry to be undeceived. On the other hand, the stanzas † which I now inclose to you have had the misfortune, by Mr. Walpole's fault, to be made still more public, for which they certainly were never meant; but it is too late to complain. They have been so applauded, it is quite a shame to repeat it: I mean not to be modest; but it is a shame for those who have said such superlative things about them, that I cannot repeat them. I should have been glad that you and two or three more people had liked them, which would have satisfied my ambition on this head amply. I have been this month in town, not at Newcastle-house; but diverting myself among my gay acquaintance, and return to

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* The house he was rebuilding in Cornhill. See Letter VII. of this Section.

† Elegy in a Country Church-yard.

my cell with so much the more pleasure. I dare not speak of my future excursion to Durham for fear of a disappointment, but at present it is my full intention.

LETTER XV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, Feb. 11, 1751.

AS you have brought me into a little sort of distress, you must assist me, I believe, to get out of it as well as I can. Yesterday I had the misfortune of receiving a letter from certain gentlemen (as their bookseller expresses it), who have taken the Magazine of Magazines into their hands: they tell me that an *ingenious* poem, called reflections in a Country Church-yard, has been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith; that they are informed that the *excellent* author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his *indulgence*, but the *honour* of his correspondence, &c. As I am not at all disposed to be either so indulgent, or so correspondent, as they desire, I have but one bad way left to escape the honour they would inflict upon me; and therefore am obliged to desire you would make Dodsley print it immediately (which may be done in less than a week's time) from your copy, but without my name, in what form is most convenient for him, but on his best paper and character; he must correct the press himself, and print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them; and the title must be,--Elegy, written in a Country Church-yard. If he would add a line or two to say it

came into his hands by accident, I should like it better. If you behold the Magazine of Magazines in the light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this trouble on my account, which you have taken of your own accord before now. If Dodsley do not do this immediately, he may as well let it alone.

LETTER XVI.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Dec. 19, 1752.

HAVE you read Madame de Maintenon's letters? They are undoubtedly genuine; they begin very early in her life, before she married Scarron, and continue after the king's death to within a little while of her own: they bear all the marks of a noble spirit (in her adversity particularly) of virtue and unaffected devotion; insomuch, that I am almost persuaded she was actually married to Lewis XVI. and never his mistress: and this not out of any policy or ambition, but conscience; for she was what we should call a bigot, yet with great good sense: in short, she was too good for a court. Misfortunes in the beginning of her life had formed her mind (naturally lively and impatient) to reflection and a habit of piety. She was always miserable while she had the care of Madame de Montespan's children; timid and very cautious of making use of that unlimited power she rose to afterwards, for fear of trespassing on the king's friendship for her; and after his death not at all afraid of meeting her own.

I do not know what to say to you with regard

to Racine; it sounds to me as if any body should fall upon Shakspeare, who indeed lies infinitely more open to criticism of all kinds; but I should not care to be the person that undertook it. If you do not like Athaliah or Britannicus, there is no more to be said. I have done.

Bishop Hall's satires, called Virgidemiæ, are lately republished. They are full of spirit and poetry; as much of the first as Dr. Donne, and far more of the latter: they were written at the university when he was about twenty-three years old, and in Queen Elizabeth's time.

You do not say whether you have read the Crito*. I only recommend the dramatic part of the Phædo to you, not the argumentative. The subject of the Erastæ is good: it treats of that peculiar character and turn of mind which belongs to a true philosopher, but it is shorter than one would wish. The Euthyphro I would not read at all.

LETTER XVII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

Stoke, Jan. 1753.

I AM at present at Stoke, to which place I came at half an hour's warning upon the news I received of my mother's illness, and did not expect to have found her alive; but when I arrived she was much better, and continues so. I shall therefore be very glad to make you a visit at Strawberry-Hill, whenever you give me notice of a convenient time. I

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* Of Plato.

am surprised at the print*, which far surpasses my idea of London graving: the drawing itself was so finished, that I suppose it did not require all the art I had imagined to copy it tolerably. My aunts seeing me open your letter, took it to be a burying-ticket, and asked whether any body had left me a ring; and so they still conceive it to be, even with all their spectacles on. Heaven forbid they should suspect it to belong to any verses of mine; they would burn me for a poet. On my own part I am satisfied, if this design of yours succeed so well as you intend it; and yet I know it will be accompanied with something not at all agreeable to me. —While I write this, I receive your second letter. —Sure, you are not out of your wits! This I know, if you suffer my head to be printed, you will infallibly put me out of mine. I conjure you immediately to put a stop to any such design. Who is at the expense of engraving it, I know not; but if it be Dodsley, I will make up the loss to him. The thing as it was, I know, will make me ridiculous enough; but to appear in proper person, at the head of my works, consisting of half a dozen ballads in thirty pages, would be worse than the

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† A proof print of the Cul de Lampe, which Mr. Bentley designed for the Elegy in a Country Church-yard, and which represents a village-funeral; this occasioned the pleasant mistake of his two aunts. The remainder of the letter relates entirely to the projected publication of Mr. Bentley's designs, which were printed after by Dodsley this same year. The latter part of it, where he so vehemently declares against having his head prefixed to that work, will appear highly characteristical to those readers who were personally acquainted with Mr. Gray. The print, which was taken from an original picture, painted by Echart, in Mr. Walpole's possession, was actually more than half engraved; but afterwards on this account suppressed.

pillory. I do assure you, if I had received such a book, with such a frontispiece, without any warning, I believe it would have given me a palsy: therefore I rejoice to have received this notice, and shall not be easy till you tell me all thoughts of it are laid aside. I am extremely in earnest, and cannot bear even the idea.

I had written to Dodsley if I had not received yours, to tell him how little I liked the title which he meant to prefix; but your letter has put all that out of my head. If you think it necessary to print these explanations * for the use of people that have no eyes, I should be glad they were a little altered. I am, to my shame, in your debt for a long letter; but I cannot think of any thing else till you have set me at ease on this matter.

While Mr. Bentley was employed in making the designs mentioned in the preceding letter, Mr. Gray, who greatly admired not only the elegance of his fancy, but also the neatness as well as facility of his execution, began a complimentary poem to him, which I shall now insert. Many readers will perhaps think the panegyric carried too far; as I own I did when he first showed it me. Yet it is but justice to declare, that the original drawings, now in Mr. Walpole's possession, which I have since seen, are so infinitely superior to the published engravings of them, that a person who has only seen the latter can by no means judge of the excellencies of the former: besides, there is so much of grotesque fancy in the designs themselves, that it can be no great matter of wonder (even if the en-

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* See the above-mentioned designs, where the explanations here alluded to are inserted.

gravers had done justice to them) that they failed to please universally. What I have said in defence of the Long Story might easily be applied to these productions of the sister art: but not to detain the reader from the perusal of a fragment, many stanzas of which are equal in poetical merit to the best in his most finished poems, I shall here only add, that it was for the sake of the design which Mr. Bentley made for the Long Story, that Mr. Gray permitted it to be printed; yet not without clearly foreseeing that he risked somewhat by the publication of it, as he intimates in the preceding letter: and indeed the event showed his judgment to be true in this particular, as it proved the least popular of all his productions.

STANZAS TO MR. BENTLEY.

IN silent gaze the tuneful choir among,
Half pleased, half blushing let the Muse admire,
While Bentley leads her sister art along,
And bids the pencil answer to the lyre.

See, in their course, each transitory thought
Fix'd by his touch a lasting essence take;
Each dream, in fancy's airy colouring wrought,
To local symmetry and life awake!

The tardy rhymes that used to linger on,
To censure cold, and negligent of fame,
In swifter measures animated run,
And catch a lustre from his genuine flame.

Ah! could they catch his strength, his easy grace,
His quick creation, his unerring line;
The energy of Pope they might efface,
And Dryden's harmony submit to mine.

But not to one in this benighted age
  Is that diviner inspiration giv'n,
That burns in Shakspeare's or in Milton's page,
  The pomp and prodigality of heav'n.

As when conspiring in the diamond's blaze,
  The meaner gems, that singly charm the sight,
Together dart their intermingled rays,
  And dazzle with a luxury of light.

* Enough for me, if to some feeling breast
  My lines a secret sympathy *impart;*
And as their pleasing influence *flows confest,*
  A sigh of soft reflection *heave the heart.*

* * * *

In the March following Mr. Gray lost that mother for whom, on all occasions, we have seen he showed so tender a regard. She was buried in the same vault where her sister's remains had been deposited more than three years before. As the inscription on the tomb-stone (at least the latter part of it) is undoubtedly of Mr. Gray's writing, it here would claim a place, even if it had not a peculiar pathos to recommend it, and, at the same time, a true inscriptive simplicity.

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* A corner of the only manuscript copy which Mr. Gray left of this fragment is unfortunately torn; and though I have endeavoured to supply the chasm, I am not quite satisfied with the words which I have inserted in the third line. I print my additions in italics, and shall be much pleased if any reader finds a better supplement to this imperfect stanza.

IN THE VAULT BENEATH ARE DEPOSITED,
IN HOPE OF A JOYFUL RESURRECTION,
THE REMAINS OF
MARY ANTROBUS.
SHE DIED, UNMARRIED, NOV. V. MDCCXLIX.
AGED LXVI.

IN THE SAME PIOUS CONFIDENCE,
BESIDE HER FRIEND AND SISTER,
HERE SLEEP THE REMAINS OF
DOROTHY GRAY,
WIDOW, THE CAREFUL TENDER MOTHER
OF MANY CHILDREN, ONE OF WHOM ALONE
HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO SURVIVE HER.
SHE DIED MARCH XI. MDCCLIII.
AGED LXVII.

LETTER XVIII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

Durham, Dec. 26, 1753.

A LITTLE while before I received your melancholy letter, I had been informed by Mr. Charles Avison of one of the sad events you mention *. I know what it is to lose persons that one's eyes and heart have long been used to; and I never desire to part with the remembrance of that loss, nor would wish you should. It is something that you

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* The death of my father, and of Dr. Marmaduke Pricket, a young physician of my own age, with whom I was brought up from infancy, who died of the same infectious fever.

had a little time to acquaint yourself with the idea beforehand; and that your father suffered but little pain, the only thing that makes death terrible. After I have said this, I cannot help expressing my surprise at the disposition he has made of his affairs. I must (if you will suffer me to say so) call it great weakness; and yet perhaps your affliction for him is heightened by that very weakness; for I know it is possible to feel an additional sorrow for the faults of those we have loved, even where that fault has been greatly injurious to ourselves. —Let me desire you not to expose yourself to any further danger in the midst of that scene of sickness and death; but withdraw as soon as possible to some place at a little distance in the country; for I do not, in the least, like the situation you are in. I do not attempt to console you on the situation your fortune is left in; if it were far worse, the good opinion I have of you tells me, you will never the sooner do any thing mean or unworthy of yourself; and consequently I cannot pity you on this account, but I sincerely do on the new loss you have had of a good and friendly man, whose memory I honour. I have seen the scene you describe, and know how dreadful it is: I know too I am the better for it. We are all idle and thoughtless things, and have no sense, no use in the world any longer than that sad impression lasts; the deeper it is engraved the better.

LETTER XIX.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Stoke, Sept. 18, 1754.

I AM glad you enter into the spirit of Strawberry-Castle; it has a purity and propriety of Gothicism in it (with very few exceptions) that I have not seen elsewhere. My Lord Radnor's vagaries I see did not keep you from doing justice to his situation, which far surpasses every thing near it; and I do not know a more laughing scene than that about Twickenham and Richmond. Dr. Akenside, I perceive, is no conjurer in architecture; especially when he talks of the ruins of Persepolis, which are no more Gothic than they are Chinese. The Egyptian style (see Dr. Pococke, not his discourses, but his prints) was apparently the mother of the Greek; and there is such a similitude between the Egyptian and those Persian ruins, as gave Diodorus room to affirm, that the old buildings of Persia were certainly performed by Egyptian artists: as to the other part of your friend's opinion, that the Gothic manner is the Saracen or Moorish, he has a great authority to support him, that of Sir Christopher Wren; and yet I cannot help thinking it undoubtedly wrong. The palaces in Spain I never saw but in description, which gives us little or no idea of things; but the Doge's palace at Venice I have seen, which is in the Arabesque manner: and the houses of Barbary you may see in Dr. Shaw's book, not to mention abundance of other Eastern buildings in Turkey, Persia, &c. that we have views of; and they seem plainly to be corruptions of the Greek architecture, broke into little parts indeed, and covered with little

ornaments, but in a taste very distinguishable from that which we call Gothic. There is one thing that runs through the Moorish buildings that an imitator would certainly have been first struck with, and would have tried to copy; and that is the cupolas which cover every thing, baths, apartments, and even kitchens; yet who ever saw a Gothic cupola? It is a thing plainly of Greek original. I do not see any thing but the slender spires that serve for steeples, which may perhaps be borrowed from the Saracen minarets on their mosques.

I take it ill you should say any thing against the Mole; it is a reflection I see cast at the Thames. Do you think that rivers, which have lived in London and its neighbourhood all their days, will run roaring and tumbling about like your tramontane torrents in the North? No, they only glide and whisper.

LETTER XX.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, March 9, 1755.

I DO not pretend to humble any one's pride; I love my own too well to attempt it. As to mortifying their vanity, it is too easy and too mean a task for me to delight in. You are very good in showing so much sensibility on my account; but be assured my taste for praise is not like that of children for fruit; if there were nothing but medlars and blackberries in the world, I could be very well content to go without any at all. I dare say that Mason, though some years younger than I, was as little elevated with the approbation of

Lord * * and Lord * *, as I am mortified by their silence.

With regard to publishing, I am not so much against the thing itself, as of publishing this ode alone *. I have two or three ideas more in my head; what is to come of them? Must they too come out in the shape of little sixpenny flams, dropping one after another till Mr. Dodsley thinks fit to collect them with Mr. This's song, and Mr. Tother's epigram, into a pretty volume? I am sure Mason must be sensible of this, and therefore cannot mean what he says; neither am I quite of your opinion with regard to strophe and antistrophe †; setting aside the difficulty of execution, methinks it has little or no effect on the ear, which scarce perceives the regular return of metres

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* His ode on the Progress of Poetry.

† He often made the same remark to me in conversation, which led me to form the last ode of Caractacus in shorter stanzas: but we must not imagine that he thought the regular Pindaric method without its use; though, as he justly says, when formed in long stanzas, it does not fully succeed in point of effect on the ear: for there was nothing which he more disliked than that chain of irregular stanzas which Cowley introduced, and falsely called Pindaric; and which, from the extreme facility of execution, produced a number of miserable imitators. Had the regular return of strophe, antistrophe, and epode no other merit than that of extreme difficulty, it ought, on this very account, to be valued; because we well know that 'easy writing is no easy reading.' It is also to be remarked, that Mr. Congreve, who (though without any lyrical powers) first introduced the regular Pindaric form into the English language, made use of the short stanzas which Mr. Gray here recommends.—See his Ode to the Queen: Works, vol. III. p. 438. Ed. Birm.

at so great a distance from one another: to make it succeed, I am persuaded the stanzas must not consist of above nine lines each at the most. Pindar has several such odes.

Mr. Gray intimates, in the foregoing letter, that he had two or three more lyrical ideas in his head: one of these was the BARD, the exordium of which was at this time finished; I say finished, because his conceptions, as well as his manner of disposing them, were so singularly exact, that he had seldom occasion to make many, except verbal emendations, after he had first committed his lines to paper. It was never his method to sketch his general design in careless verse*; he always finished as he pro-

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* I have many of his critical letters by me on my own compositions; letters which, though they would not much amuse the public in general, contain excellent lessons for young poets: from one of these I extract the following passage, which seems to explain this matter more fully: 'Extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical, is one of the grand beauties of lyric poetry: this I have always aimed at, and never could attain. The necessity of rhyming is one great obstacle to it: another, and perhaps a stronger, is that way you have chosen, of casting down your first thoughts carelessly and at large, and then clipping them here and there at leisure. This method, after all possible pains, will leave behind it a laxity, a diffuseness. The frame of a thought (otherwise well-invented, well-turned, and well-placed), is often weakened by it. Do I talk nonsense? Or do you understand me? I am persuaded what I say is true in my head, whatever it may be in prose; for I do not pretend to write prose.' Nothing can be more

ceeded; this, though it made his execution slow, made his compositions more perfect. I think, however, that this method was only calculated to produce such short works as generally employed his poetical pen; and that from pursuing it, he grew tired of his larger designs before he had completed them. The fact seems to justify my opinion. But my principal reason for mentioning this at present, is to explain the cause why I have not

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just than this remark: yet, as I say above, it is a mode of writing which is only calculated for smaller compositions: but Mr. Gray, though he applied it here to an ode, was apt to think it a general rule. Now if an epic or dramatic poet were to resolve to finish every part of his work as highly as we have seen Mr. Gray laboured his first scene of Agrippina, I am apt to think he would tire of it as soon as our author did; for in the course of so multifarious a work, he would find himself obliged to expunge some of the best written parts, in order to preserve the unity of the whole. I know only one way to prevent this, and that was the method which Racine followed; who (as his son tells us, in that amusing life, though much zested with bigotry, which he has given us of his father) when he began a drama, disposed every part of it accurately in prose; and when he had connected all the scenes together, used to say, 'Ma tragedie est faite.' (See La Vie de Jean Racine, p. 117. See also his son's other works, tom. 2d, for a specimen in the first act of the 'Iphigenia in Tauris.' M. Racine, it seems, was an easy versifier in a language in which, they say, it is more difficult than in ours to versify. It certainly is so with regard to dramatic compositions. I am on this account persuaded, that if the great poet had written in English, he would have drawn out his first sketches, not in prose, but in careless blank verse; yet this I give as mere matter of opinion.

been scrupulous in publishing so many of his fragments in the course of these Memoirs. It would have been unpardonable in me to have taken this liberty with a deceased friend, had I not found his lines, as far as they went, nearly as high finished as they would have been, when completed: if I am mistaken in this, I hope the reader will rather impute it to a defect in my own judgment than a want of respect to Mr. Gray's memory.

This consideration, however, emboldens me to print the following fragment of an ode in this place, which was unquestionably another of the ideas alluded to in the preceding letter: since I find in his memorandum-book, of the preceding year 1754, a sketch of his design as follows: 'Contrast between the winter past and coming spring.—Joy owing to that vicissitude.—Many who never feel that delight.—Sloth.—Envy.—Ambition. How much happier the rustic who feels it, though he knows not how.' I print this careless note, in order that the reader may conceive the intended argument of the whole; who, I doubt not, will, on perusing the following beautiful stanzas, lament with me that he left it incomplete; nor will it console him for the loss, if I tell him that I have had the boldness to attempt to finish it myself, making use of some other lines and broken stanzas which he had written: but as my aim in undertaking this difficult task was merely to elucidate the poet's general meaning, I did not think that my additions were worthy to be inserted in this place; they have found a more fit situation by being thrown amongst those notes which I have put at the end of the volume.

ODE.

NOW the golden Morn aloft
Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermil cheek, and whisper soft
She wooes the tardy Spring:
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground;
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance
The birds his presence greet:
But chief, the sky-lark warbles high
His trembling thrilling ecstacy;
And, lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Yesterday the sullen year
Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
Mute was the music of the air,
The herd stood drooping by:
Their raptures now that wildly flow,
No yesterday, nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy descries
With forward, and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past Misfortune's brow,
Soft Reflection's hand can trace;
And o'er the cheek of Sorrow throw
A melancholy grace:
While hope prolongs our happier hour;
Or deepest shades, that dimly lower
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still, where rosy Pleasure leads,
See a kindred Grief pursue;
Behind the steps that Misery treads
Approaching Comfort view:
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe;
And blended form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of life.

See the wretch, that long has tost
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe, and walk again:
The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.

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A third of these ideas I find in his common-place book, on the same page with his argument for the BARD*. I do not believe that he ever even began to compose the ode itself; but the thought is as follows:

"All that men of power can do for men of genius is to leave them at their liberty, compared to birds that, when confined to a cage, do but regret the loss of their freedom in melancholy strains, and lose the luscious wildness and happy luxuriance of their notes, which used to make the woods resound.'

Those who are conversant in the arrangement of a lyrical composition will easily perceive, from this short argument, that the ode would have opened with the simile; which, when adorned with those *thoughts that breathe and words that burn*, that Mr. Gray's muse could so richly supply,

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* I have inserted this, with some remarks upon it, in my additional notes o his poems.

would have been at once a fine exordium, and at the same time a natural introduction to the truth he meant to impress. This, however, could hardly have been done without some little aid borrowed from satire: for however true his proposition may be, that 'all that men of power can do for men of genius is to leave them at liberty;' or, as I should put it, 'that their best patronage signifies nothing if it abridges them of that liberty;' yet the fact is, that neither of the parties are convinced of this truth till they have tried the experiment, and find some reason or other (no matter whether good or bad) to think they had better never have tried it. Mons. d'Alembert, who has written an excellent essay on this subject, which Mr. Gray greatly admired, and which perhaps gave him the first idea of this intended ode, puts one of the more common of these reasons in so lively a manner, that it may not be amiss here to insert it.

'Parmi les grands seigneurs les plus affables il en est peu qui se depouillent avec des gens de lettres de leur grandeur, vraie ou pretendue, jusqu'au point de l'oublier tout-a-fait. C'est ce qu'on apperçoit sur tout dans les conversations, où l'on n'est pas de leur avis. Il semble qu'a mesure que l'homme d'esprit s'eclipse, l'homme de qualité se montre; et paroisse exiger la deference dont l'homme d'esprit avoit commencé par dispenser. Aussi le commerce intime des grands avec les gens de lettres ne finit que trop souvent par quelque rupture eclatante; rupture qui vient presque toujours de l'oubli des regards reciproques auxquelles on a manquè de part ou d'autre, peut etre même des deux côtés*.' However, I think a man of letters ought to have other reasons besides this for

* Essai sur la Societé des Grands, avec les Gens de Lettres; 'Melanges de Litterature et Philosophie,' tom. 2d, p. 134.

breaking such a connexion after it has been once formed.

I have now given the reader the best account in my power of what our author's unfinished lyrical ideas consisted: I believe they are all that he in any sort committed to paper, and probably those which he immediately alluded to in the preceding letter.

LETTER XXI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. STONHEWER *.

August 21, 1755.

I THANK you for your intelligence about Herculaneum, which was the first news I received of it. I have since turned over Monsignor Baiardi's book †, where I have learned how many grains of modern wheat the Roman Congius, in the Capitol, holds, and how many thousandth parts of an inch the Greek foot consisted of more (or less, for I forgot which) than our own. He proves also by many affecting examples, that an antiquary may

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* Now Auditor of Excise. His friendship with Mr. Gray commenced at College, and continued till the death of the latter.

† I believe the book here ridiculed was published by the authority of the King of Naples. But afterwards, on finding how ill qualified the author was to execute the task, the business of describing the antiquities found at Herculaneum was put into other hands; who have certainly, as far as they have gone, performed it much better.

be mistaken: that, for any thing any body knows, this place under-ground might be some other place, and not Herculaneum; but nevertheless, that he can show for certain, that it was this place and no other place; that it is hard to say which of the several Hercules's was the founder; therefore (in the third volume) he promises to give us the memoirs of them all; and after that, if we do not know what to think of the matter, he will tell us. There is a great deal of wit too, and satire and verses, in the book, which is intended chiefly for the information of the French King, who will be greatly edified without doubt.

I am much obliged to you also for Voltaire's performance; it is very unequal, as he is apt to be in all but his dramas, and looks like the work of a man that will admire his retreat and his Leman-Lake no longer than till he finds an opportunity to leave it*: however, though there be many parts which I do not like, yet it is in several places excellent, and every where above mediocrity. As you have the politeness to pretend impatience, and desire I would communicate, and all that, I annex a piece of the prophecy†: which must be true at least, as it was wrote so many hundred years after the events.

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* I do not recollect the title of this poem, but it was a small one which M. de Voltaire wrote when he first settled at Ferney. By the long residence he has since made there, it appears either that our author was mistaken in his conjecture, or that an opportunity of leaving it had not yet happened.

† The second antistrophe and epode, with a few lines of the third strophe of his ode, entitled the Bard, were here inserted.

LETTER XXII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Pembroke-Hall, March 25, 1756.

THOUGH I had no reasonable excuse for myself before I received your last letter, yet since that time I have had a pretty good one; having been taken up in quarrelling with Peter-house*, and in removing myself from thence to Pembroke. This may be looked upon as a sort of æra in a life so barren of events as mine; yet I shall treat it in Voltaire's manner, and only tell you that I left my lodgings because the rooms were noisy, and the people of the house uncivil. This is all I would choose to have said about it; but if you in private should be curious enough to enter into a particular detail of facts and minute circumstances, the bearer, who was witness to them, will probably sa-

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* The reason of Mr. Gray's changing his College, which is here only glanced at, was in few words this: Two or three young men of fortune, who lived in the same staircase, had for some time intentionally disturbed him with their riots, and carried their ill behaviour so far as frequently to awaken him at midnight. After having borne with their insults longer than might reasonably have been expected even from a man of less warmth of temper, Mr. Gray complained to the governing part of the society; and not thinking that his remonstrance was sufficiently attended to, quitted the College. The slight manner in which he mentions this affair, when writing to one of his most intimate friends, certainly does honour to the placability of his disposition.

tisfy you. All I shall say more is, that I am for the present extremely well lodged here, and as quiet as in the Grand Chartreuse; and that every body (even Dr. Long himself) are as civil as they could be to * Mary of Valens in person.

With regard to any advice I can give you about your being physician to the hospital, I frankly own it ought to give way to a much better judge, especially so disinterested a one as Dr. Heberden. I love refusals no more than you do. But as to your fears of effluvia, I maintain that one sick rich patient has more of pestilence and putrefaction about him than a whole ward of sick poor.

The similitude between the Italian Republics and those of Ancient Greece has often struck me, as it does you. I do not wonder that Sully's Memoirs have highly entertained you; but cannot agree with you in thinking him or his master two of the best men in the world. The king was indeed one of the best-natured men that ever lived; but it is owing only to chance that his intended marriage with Madame d'Estrées, or with the Marquise de Verneuil, did not involve him and the kingdom in the most inextricable confusion; and his design upon the Princess of Condé (in his old age) was worse still. As to the minister, his base application to Concini, after the murder of Henry, has quite ruined him in my esteem, and destroyed all the merit of that honest surly pride for which I honoured him before; yet I own that, as kings and ministers go, they were both extraordinary men. Pray look at the end of Birch's State Papers of Sir J. Edmonds, for the character of the French court at that time; it is written by Sir George Carew.

You should have received Mason's present † last

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* Foundress of the College.

† The four Odes which I had just published separately.

Saturday. I desire you to tell me your critical opinion of the New Odes, and also whether you have found out two lines which he has inserted in his third to a friend, which are superlative*. We do not expect the world, which is just going to be invaded, will bestow much attention on them; if you hear any thing, you will tell us.

LETTER XXIII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

June 14, 1756.

THOUGH I allow abundance for your kindness and partiality to me, I am yet much pleased with the good opinion you seem to have of the Bard: I have not, however, done a word more than the little you have seen, having been in a very listless, unpleasant, and *inutile* state of mind for this long

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* I should leave the reader to guess (if he thought it worth his while) what this couplet was, which is here commended so much beyond its merit, did not the ode conclude with a compliment to Mr. Gray, in which part he might probably look for it, as those lines were written with the greater care. To secure, therefore, my friend from any imputation of vanity, whatever becomes of myself, I shall here insert the passage.

While through the west, where sinks the crimson day,
Meek Twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners gray.

time, for which I shall beg you to prescribe me somewhat strengthening and agglutinant, lest it turn to a confirmed phthisis.

I recommend two little French books to you, one called Memoires de M. de la Porte; it has all the air of simplicity and truth, and contains some few very extraordinary facts relating to Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarine. The other is in two small volumes, 'Memoires de Madame Staal.' The facts are no great matter, but the manner and vivacity make them interesting. She was a sort of confidante to the late Duchess of Maine, and imprisoned a long time on her account during the regency.

I ought before now to have thanked you for your kind offer, which I mean soon to accept, for a reason which to be sure can be none to you and Mrs. Wharton; and therefore I think it my duty to give you notice of it. I have told you already of my mental ailments; and it is a very possible thing also that I may be bodily ill again in town, which I would not choose to be in a dirty inconvenient lodging, where, perhaps, my nurse might stifle me with a pillow; and therefore it is no wonder if I prefer your house: but I tell you of this in time, that if either of you are frightened at the thoughts of a sick body, you may make a handsome excuse, and save yourselves this trouble. You are not, however, to imagine my illness is *in esse;* no, it is only *in posse;* otherwise I should be scrupulous of bringing it home to you. I think I shall be with you in about a fortnight.

LETTER XXIV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

Stoke, July 25, 1756.

I FEEL a contrition for my long silence; and yet perhaps it is the last thing you trouble your head about. Nevertheless I will be as sorry as if you took it ill. I am sorry too to see you so punctilious as to stand upon answers, and never to come near me till I have regularly left my name at your door, like a mercer's wife, that imitates people who go a visiting. I would forgive you this, if you could possibly suspect I were doing any thing that I liked better; for then your formality might look like being piqued at my negligence, which has somewhat in it like kindness: but you know I am at Stoke, hearing, seeing, doing absolutely nothing. Not such a nothing as you do at Tunbridge, chequered and diversified with a succession of fleeting colours; but heavy, lifeless, without form and void; sometimes almost as black as the moral of Voltaire's Lisbon*, which angers you so. I have had no more muscular inflations, and am only troubled with this depression of mind. You will not expect therefore I should give you any account of my *Verve*, which is at best (you know) of so delicate a constitution, and has such weak nerves, as not to stir out of its chamber above three days in a year. But I shall inquire after yours, and why it is off again? It has certainly worse nerves than mine, if your reviewers have frighted it. Sure I (not to mention a score of your other critics) am

* His poem 'sur la Destruction de Lisbon,' published about that time.

something a better judge than all the man-midwives and presbyterian parsons* that ever were born. Pray give me leave to ask you, do you find yourself tickled with the commendations of such people? (for you have your share of these too) I dare say not; your vanity has certainly a better taste. And can then the censure of such critics move you? I own it is an impertinence in these gentry to talk of one at all either in good or in bad; but this we must all swallow: I mean not only we that write, but all the *we's* that ever did any thing to be talked of.

While I am writing I receive yours, and rejoice to find that the genial influences of this fine season, which produce nothing in me, have hatched high and unimaginable fantasies in you†. I see, methinks, as I sit on Snowdon, some glimpse of Mona and her haunted shades, and hope we shall be very good neighbours. Any druidical anecdotes that I can meet with, I will be sure to send you when I return to Cambridge; but I cannot pretend to be learned without books, or to know the Druids from modern bishops at this distance. I can only tell you not to go and take Mona for the Isle of Man: it is Anglesey, a tract of plain country, very fertile, but picturesque only from the view it has of Caernarvonshire, from which it is separated by the Menai, a narrow arm of the sea. Forgive me for supposing in you such a want of erudition.

I congratulate you on our glorious successes in the Mediterranean. Shall we go in time, and hire a house together in Switzerland? It is a fine poetical country to look at, and nobody there will understand a word we say or write.

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* The reviewers, at the time, were supposed to be of these professions.

† I had sent him my first idea of Caractacus, drawn out in a short argument.

LETTER XXV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

Cambridge, May, 1757.

YOU are so forgetful of me that I should not forgive it, but that I suppose Caractacus may be the better for it. Yet I hear nothing from him neither, in spite of his promises: there is no faith in man, no not in a Welchman; and yet Mr. Parry * has been here, and scratched out such ravishing blind harmony, such tunes of a thousand years old, with names enough to choke you, as have set all this learned body a dancing, and inspired them with due reverence for my old Bard his countryman, whenever he shall appear. Mr. Parry, you must know, has put my ode in motion again, and has brought it at last to a conclusion. 'Tis to him, therefore, that you owe the treat which I send you inclosed; namely, the breast and merry-thought, and rump too of the chicken which I have been chewing so long, that I would give the world for neck-beef or cow-heel.

You will observe, in the beginning of this thing, some alterations of a few words, partly for improvement, and partly to avoid repetitions of like words and rhymes; yet I have not got rid of them all; the six last lines of the fifth stanza are new, tell me whether they will do. I am well aware of many weakly things towards the conclusion, but I hope the end itself will do; give me your full and

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* A capital performer on the Welch harp, and who was either born blind, or had been so from his infancy.

true opinion, and that not upon deliberation, but forthwith. Mr. Hurd himself allows that *Lion-port* is not too bold for Queen Elizabeth.

I have got the old Scotch ballad on which Douglas * was founded; it is divine, and as long as from hence to Aston. Have you never seen it? Aristotle's best rules are observed in it, in a manner that shows the author had never read Aristotle. It begins in the fifth act of the play: you may read it two thirds through without guessing what it is about; and yet, when you come to the end, it is impossible not to understand the whole story. I send you the two first stanzas.

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* He had a high opinion of this first drama of Mr. Home. In a letter to another friend, dated August 10, this year, he says, 'I am greatly struck with the tragedy of Douglas, though it has infinite faults: the author seems to me to have retrieved the true language of the stage, which had been lost for these hundred years; and there is one scene (between Matilda and the old peasant) so masterly, that it strikes me blind to all the defects in the world.' The ballad, which he here applauds, is to be found in Mr. Percy's Reliques of ancient Poetry, Vol. III. p. 89, a work published after the date of this letter.

LETTER XXVI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. HURD*.

Stoke, August 25, 1757.

I DO not know why you should thank me for what you had a right and title to†; but attribute it to the excess of your politeness; and the more so, because almost no one else has made me the same compliment. As your acquaintance in the University (you say) do me the honour to *admire*, it would be ungenerous in me not to give them notice, that they are doing a very unfashionable thing; for all people of condition are agreed not to admire, nor even to understand. One very great man, writing to an acquaintance of his and mine, says that he had read them seven or eight times; and that now, when he next sees him, he shall not have above *thirty questions* to ask. Another (a peer) believes that the last stanza of the second ode relates to King Charles the First and Oliver Cromwell. Even my friends tell me they do not *succeed*, and write me moving topics of consolation on that head. In short, I have heard of nobody but an actor and a doctor of divinity that profess their esteem for them‡. Oh yes, a lady of quality,

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* Now Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.

† A present of his two Pindaric Odes just then published.

‡ This was written August 25, 1757. An extract from a letter of Mr. Gray to Dr. Wharton, dated October 7, 1757, mentions another admirer, whom he knew how to value. 'Dr. Warburton is come to town, and I am told likes them extremely: he

(a friend of Mason's) who is a great reader. She knew there was a compliment to Dryden, but never suspected there was any thing said about Shakspeare or Milton, till it was explained to her; and wishes that there had been titles prefixed to tell what they were about.

From this mention of Mason's name you may think, perhaps, we are great correspondents. No such thing; I have not heard from him these two months. I will be sure to scold in my own name, as well as in yours. I rejoice to hear you are so ripe for the press, and so voluminous; not for my own sake only, whom you flatter with the hopes of seeing your labours both public and private, but for yours too; for to be employed is to be happy. This principle of mine (and I am convinced of its truth) has, as usual, no influence on my practice. I am alone, and *ennuyé* to the last degree, yet do nothing. Indeed I have one excuse; my health (which you have so kindly inquired after) is not extraordinary, ever since I came hither. It is no great malady, but several little ones, that seem brewing no good to me. It will be a particular

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says the world never passed so just an opinion upon any thing as upon them; for that in other things they have affected to like or dislike: whereas here they own they do not understand, which he looks upon to be very true; but yet thinks they understand them as well as Milton or Shakspeare, whom they are obliged, by fashion, to admire. Mr. Garrick's complimentary verses to me you have seen; I am told they were printed in the Chronicle of last Saturday. The Critical Review is in raptures; but mistakes the Æolian lyre for the harp of Æolus, and on this pleasant error founds both a compliment and a criticism. This is all I heard that signifies any thing.'

pleasure to me to hear whether Content dwells in Leicestershire, and how she entertains herself there. Only do not be too happy, nor forget entirely the quiet ugliness of Cambridge.

LETTER XXVII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

Stoke, Sept. 28, 1757.

I HAVE (as I desired Mr. Stonhewer to tell you) read over Caractacus twice, not with pleasure only, but with emotion. You may say what you will; but the contrivance, the manners, the interests, the passions, and the expression, go beyond the dramatic part * of your Elfrida, many many leagues.

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* In the manuscript now before him, Mr. Gray had only the first ode, the others were not then written; and although the dramatic part was brought to a conclusion, yet it was afterwards in many places altered. He was mistaken with regard to the opinion the world would have about it. That world, which usually loves to be led in such matters, rather than form an opinion for itself, was taught a different sentiment; and one of its leaders went so far as to declare, that he never knew a second work fall so much below a first from the same hand. To oppose Mr. Gray's judgment to his, I must own gives me some satisfaction; and to enjoy it I am willing to risk that imputation of vanity, which may probably fall to my share for having published this letter. I must add,

I even say (though you will think me a bad judge of this) that the *world* will like it better. I am struck with the Chorus, who are not there merely to sing and dance, but bear throughout a principal part in the action; and have (beside the *costume*, which is excellent) as much a character of their own, as any other person. I am charmed with their priestly pride and obstinancy, when, after all is lost, they resolve to confront the Roman general, and spit in his face. But now I am going to tell you what touches me most from the beginning. The first opening is greatly improved: the curiosity of Didius is now a very natural reason for dwelling on each particular of the scene before him; nor is the description at all too long. I am glad to find the two young men are Cartismandua's sons. They interest me far more. I love people of condition. They were men before that nobody knew: one could not make them a bow if one had met them at a public place.

I always admired that interruption of the Druids to Evelina, *Peace, virgin, peace,* &c. and chiefly the *abstract idea personified* (to use the words of a critic) at the end of it. That of Caractacus, *Would save my Queen,* &c. and still more that, *I know it, reverend Fathers, 'tis Heaven's high will,* &c. to *I've done, begin the rites!* This latter is exemplary for the expression (always the great point with me); I do not mean by expression the mere choice of words, but the whole dress, fashion, and arrangement of a thought. Here, in particular, it is the brokenness, the ungrammatical position, the total subversion of the period that charms me. All that ushers in the incantation from *Try we yet, what holiness can do,* I am delighted with in quite

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however, that some of my friends advised it for the sake of the more *general* criticisms which they thought too valuable to be suppressed.

another way; for this is pure poetry, as it ought to be, forming the proper transition, and leading on the mind to that still purer poetry that follows it.

In the beginning of the succeeding act I admire the Chorus again, *Is it not now the hour, the holy hour*, &c. and their evasion of a lie, *Say'st thou, proud boy*, &c. and *sleep with the unsunn'd silver*, which is an example of a dramatic simile. The sudden appearance of Caractacus, the pretended respect and admiration of Vellinus, and the probability of his story, the distrust of the Druids, and their reasoning with Caractacus, and particularly that *'Tis meet thou should'st, thou art a King*, &c. and *Mark me, Prince, the time will come, when Destiny*, &c. are well, and happily imagined. A-propos, of the last striking passage I have mentioned, I am going to make a digression.

When we treat a subject, where the manners are almost lost in antiquity, our stock of ideas must needs be small; and nothing betrays our poverty more than the returning to, and harping frequently on, one image. It was therefore I thought you should omit some lines before, though good in themselves, about the *scythed car*, that the passage now before us might appear with greater lustre when it came; and in this I see you have complied with me. But there are other ideas here and there still, that occur too often, particularly about *the Oaks*, some of which I would discard to make way for the rest.

But the subjects I speak of to compensate (and more than compensate) that unavoidable poverty, have one great advantage when they fall into good hands. They leave an unbounded liberty to pure imagination and fiction, (our favourite provinces) where no critic can molest, or antiquary gainsay us; and yet (to please me) these fictions must have some affinity, some seeming *connexion*, with that little we really know of the character and customs of the people. For example, I never heard in my

days that Midnight and the Moon were sisters; that they carried rods of ebony and gold, or met to whisper on the top of a mountain: but now I could lay my life it is all true; and do not doubt it will be found so in some Pantheon of the Druids, that is to be discovered in the Library at Herculaneum. The *Car of Destiny and Death* is a very noble invention of the same class, and, as far as that goes, is so fine, that it makes me more delicate, than perhaps I should be, about the close of it. *Andraste sailing on the wings of Fame*, that snatches the wreaths from oblivion to hang them on her loftiest Amaranth, though a clear and beautiful piece of *unknown* mythology, has too *Greek* an air to give me perfect satisfaction.

Now I proceed. The preparation to the Chorus, though so much akin to that in the former act, is excellent. The remarks of Evelina and her suspicions of the brothers, mixed with a secret inclination to the younger of them, (though, I think, her part throughout wants retouching) yet please me much, and the contrivance of the following scene much more. *Masters of Wisdom, no*, &c. I always admired; as I do the rocking stone, and the distress of Elidurus. Evelina's examination of him is a well-invented scene, and will be, with a little pains, a very touching one; but the introduction of Arviragus is superlative. I am not sure whether those few lines of his short narrative, *My strength repair'd, it boots not, that I tell*, &c. do not please me as much as any thing in the whole drama. The sullen bravery of Elidurus, the menaces of the Chorus, that *Think not, Religion*, &c. the trumpet of the Druids, that *I'll follow him, though in my chains*, &c. *Hast thou a brother, no*, &c. the placability of the Chorus, when they see the motives of Elidurus's obstinacy, give me great contentment: so do the reflections of the Druid on the necessity of lustration, and the reasons for Vellinus's easy escape; but I would not have him *seize on a*

spear, nor *issue hasty through the cavern's mouth.* Why should he not steal away, unasked and unmissed, till the hurry of passions in those, that should have guarded him, was a little abated? But I chiefly admire the two speeches of Elidurus; *Ah, Vellinus, is this then,* &c. and *Ye do gaze on me, Fathers,* &c. the manner in which the Chorus reply to him is very fine; but the image at the end wants a little mending. The next scene is highly moving: it is so very good, that I must have it made yet better.

Now for the last act. I do not know what you would have, but to me the design and contrivance of it is at least equal to any part of the whole. The short-lived triumph of the Britons, the address of Caractacus to the Roman victims, Evelina's discovery of the ambush, the mistake of the Roman fires for the rising sun, the death of Arviragus, the interview between Didius and Caractacus, his mourning over his dead son, his parting speech, (in which you have made all the use of Tacitus that your plan would admit) every thing, in short, but that little dispute between Didius and him; *'Tis well; and therefore to increase that reverence,* &c. down to, *Give me a moment* (which must be omitted, or put in the mouth of the Druids) I approve in the highest degree. If I should find any fault with the last act, it could only be with trifles and little expressions. If you make any alterations, I fear it will never improve it; I mean as to the plan. I send you back the two last sheets because you bid me. I reserve my nibblings and minutiæ for another day.

LETTER XXVIII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

Cambridge, Dec. 19, 1757.

A LIFE spent out of the world has its hours of despondence, its inconveniencies, its sufferings, as numerous and as real, though not quite of the same sort, as a life spent in the midst of it. The power we have, when we will exert it over our own minds, joined to a little strength and consolation, nay, a little pride we catch from those that seem to love us, is our only support in either of these conditions. I am sensible I cannot return you more of this assistance than I have received from you; and can only tell you, that one who has far more reason than you, I hope, ever will have to look on life with something worse than indifference, is yet no enemy to it; but can look backward on many bitter moments partly with satisfaction, and partly with patience; and forward too, on a scene not very promising, with some hope, and some expectations of a better day. The cause, however, which occasioned your reflection, (though I can judge but very imperfectly of it) does not seem, at present, to be weighty enough to make you take any such resolution as you meditate. Use it in its season, as a relief from what is tiresome to you, but not as if it was in consequence of any thing you take ill; on the contrary, if such a thing had happened at the time of your transmigration, I would defer it merely to avoid that appearance.

As to myself, I cannot boast, at present, either of my spirits, my situation, my employments, or fertility. The days and the nights pass, and I am never the nearer to any thing, but that one to

which we are all tending; yet I love people that leave some traces of their journey behind them, and have strength enough to advise you to do so while you can. I expect to see Caractacus completed, and therefore I send you the books you wanted. I do not know whether they will furnish you with any new matter; but they are well enough written, and easily read. I told you before that (in a time of dearth) I would borrow from the Edda, without entering too minutely on particulars: but, if I did so, I would make each image so clear, that it might be fully understood by itself; for in this obscure mythology we must not hint at things, as we do with the Greek fables, that every body is supposed to know at school. However, on second thoughts, I think it would be still better to graft any wild picturesque fable, absolutely of one's own invention, on the Druid-stock; I mean on those half dozen of old fancies that are known to be a part of their system. This will give you more freedom and latitude, and will leave no hold for the critics to fasten on.

I send you back the Elegy* as you desired me to do. My advices are always at your service to take or to refuse, therefore you should not call them severe. You know I do not love, much less pique myself on criticism; and think even a bad verse as good a thing or better than the best observation that ever was made upon it. I like greatly the spirit and sentiment of it (much of which you perhaps owe to your present train of thinking); the disposition of the whole too is natural and elegiac; as to the expression, I would venture to say (did not you forbid me) that it is sometimes too easy. The last line I protest against (this, you will say, is worse than blotting out rhymes); the descriptive part is excellent.

Pray, when did I pretend to finish, or even insert

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* Elegy in the Garden of a Friend.

passages into other people's works, as if it were equally easy to pick holes and to mend them? All I can say is, that your Elegy must not end with the worst line in it*. It is flat; it is prose; whereas that, above all, ought to sparkle, or at least to shine. If the sentiment must stand, twirl it a little into an apophthegm: stick a flower in it; gild it with a costly expression; let it strike the fancy, the ear, or the heart, and I am satisfied.

The other particular expressions which I object to, I mark on the manuscript. Now, I desire you would neither think me severe, nor at all regard what I say further than as it coincides with your own judgment; for the child deserves your partiality; it is a healthy well-made boy with an ingenuous countenance, and promises to live long. I would only wash its face, dress it a little, make it walk upright and strong, and keep it from learning *paw* words.

I hope you couched my refusal† to Lord John Cavendish in as respectful terms as possible, and with all due acknowledgment to the Duke. If you hear who it is to be given to, pray let me know; for I interest myself a little in the history of it, and rather wish somebody may accept it that will retrieve the credit of the thing, if it be retrievable, or ever had any credit. Rowe was, I think, the last man of character that had it; Eusden was a person of great hopes in his youth, though at last he turned out a drunken parson; Dryden was as

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* An attempt was accordingly made to improve it; how it stood when this criticism upon it was written, I cannot now recollect.

† Of being Poet Laureat on the death of Cibber, which place the late Duke of Devonshire (then Lord Chamberlain) desired his brother to offer to Mr. Gray; and his Lordship had commissioned me (then in town) to write to him concerning it.

disgraceful to the office, from his character, as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses.

LETTER XXIX.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

February 24, 1751.

WOULD you know what I am doing? I doubt you have been told already, and hold my employments cheap enough; but every one must judge of his own *capability*, and *cut* his amusements according to his disposition. The drift of my present studies is to know, wherever I am, what lies within reach that may be worth seeing, whether it be building, ruin, park, garden, prospect, picture, or monument; to whom it does or has belonged, and what has been the characteristic and taste of different ages. You will say this is the object of all antiquaries; but pray what antiquary ever saw these objects in the same light, or desired to know them for a like reason? In short, say what you please, I am persuaded whenever my list* is finished you will approve it, and think it of no small use. My spirits are very near the freezing

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* He wrote it, under its several divisons, on the blank pages of a pocket atlas. I printed lately a few copies of this catalogue for the use of some friends curious in such matters; and, when I am sufficiently furnished with their observations and improvements upon it, shall perhaps reprint it and give it to the public, as a shorter and more useful Pocket Companion to the English Traveller than has hitherto appeared.

point; and for some hours of the day this exercise, by its warmth and gentle motion, serves to raise them a few degrees higher.

I hope the misfortune that has befallen Mrs. Cibber's canary bird will not be the ruin of Agis: it is probable you will have curiosity enough to see it, as it is by the author of Douglas.

LETTER XXX.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, March 8, 1758.

IT is indeed for want of spirits, as you suspect, that my studies lie among the cathedrals, and the tombs, and the ruins. To think, though to little purpose, has been the chief amusement of my days; and when I would not or cannot think, I dream. At present I feel myself able to write a catalogue, or to read the Peerage book, or Miller's Gardening Dictionary, and am thankful that there are such employments and such authors in the world. Some people, who hold me cheap for this, are doing perhaps what is not half so well worth while. As to posterity, I may ask, (with somebody whom I have forget) what has it ever done to oblige me?

To make a transition from myself to as poor a subject, the Tragedy of Agis; I cry to think that it should be by the author of Douglas: why, it is all modern Greek; the story is an antique statue painted white and red, frized, and dressed in a negligée made by a Yorkshire mantua-maker. Then here is the Miscellany (Mr. Dodsley has sent me the whole set gilt and lettered, I thank him). Why,

the two last volumes are worse than the four first; particularly Dr. Akenside is in a deplorable way *. What signifies learning and the ancients, (Mason will say triumphantly) why should people read Greek to lose their imagination, their ear, and their mother tongue? But then there is Mr. Shenstone, who trusts to nature and simple sentiment, why does he do no better? he goes hopping along his own gravel-walks, and never deviates from the beaten paths for fear of being lost.

I have read Dr. Swift, and am disappointed †. There is nothing of the negotiations that I have not seen better in M. de Torcy before. The manner is careless, and has little to distinguish it from common writers. I meet with nothing to please me but the spiteful characters of the opposite party and its leaders. I expected much more secret history.

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* I have been told that this writer, unquestionably a man of great learning and genius, entertained, some years before his death, a notion that *poetry was only true eloquence in metre;* and, according to this idea, wrote his Ode to the Country Gentlemen of England, and afterwards made considerable alterations in that collection of Odes which he had published in the earlier part of his life. We have seen in the second letter of this section, that Mr. Gray thought highly of his descriptive talents at that time. We are not therefore to impute what he here says to any prejudice in the critic, but to that change of taste in the poet, which (if the above anecdote be true) would unavoidably flatten his descriptions, and divest them of all picturesque imagery; nay, would sometimes convert his verse into mere prose; or, what is still worse, hard inflated prose.

† His history of the four last years of Queen Anne.

LETTER XXXI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. STONHEWER.

Cambridge, August 18, 1758.

I AM as sorry as you seem to be, that our acquaintance harped so much on the subject of materialism, when I saw him with you in town, because it was plain to which side of the long-debated question he inclined. That we are indeed mechanical and dependent beings, I need no other proof than my own feelings; and from the same feelings I learn, with equal conviction, that we are not *merely* such: that there is a power within that struggles against the force and bias of that mechanism, commands its motion, and, by frequent practice, reduces it to that ready obedience which we call *habit;* and all this in conformity to a preconceived opinion (no matter whether right or wrong) to that least material of all agents, a Thought. I have known many in his case who, while they thought they were conquering an old prejudice, did not perceive they were under the influence of one far more dangerous; one that furnishes us with a ready apology for all our worst actions, and opens to us a full licence for doing whatever we please; and yet these very people were not at all the more indulgent to other men (as they naturally should have been); their indignation to such as offended them, their desire of revenge on any body that hurt them was nothing mitigated: in short, the truth is, they wished to be persuaded of that opinion for the sake of its convenience, but were not so in their heart; and they would have been glad (as they ought in common prudence) that nobody else should think the same, for fear of the mischief that might ensue to themselves. His French

author I never saw, but have read fifty in the same strain, and shall read no more. I can be wretched enough without them. They put me in mind of the Greek Sophist that got immortal honour by discoursing so feelingly on the miseries of our condition, that fifty of his audience went home and hanged themselves; yet he lived himself (I suppose) many years after in very good plight.

You say you cannot conceive how Lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue; I will tell you: First, he was a lord; 2dly, he was as vain as any of his readers; 3dly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; 4thly, they will believe any thing at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; 5thly, they love to take a new road, even when that road leads nowhere; 6thly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seemed always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks but with commoners: vanity is no longer interested in the matter, for the new road is become an old one. The mode of free-thinking is like that of ruffs and farthingales, and has given place to the mode of not thinking at all; once it was reckoned graceful half to discover and half conceal the mind, but now we have been long accustomed to see it quite naked: primness and affectation of style, like the good breeding of Queen Anne's court, has turned to hoydening and rude familiarity.

It will, I think, be no improper supplement to the foregoing letter to insert a paper of Mr. Gray's, which contains some very pertinent strictures on the writings of a later lord, who was pleased to attack the moral attributes of the Deity; or, what amounted

to the same thing, endeavoured to prove, "that we have no adequate ideas of his goodness and justice, as we have of his natural ones, his wisdom and power." This position the excellent author of the View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy calls the MAIN PILLAR of his system; and adds, in another place, that the FATE OF ALL RELIGION is included in this question. On this important point, therefore, that able writer has dwelt largely, and confuted his lordship effectually. Some sort of readers, however, who probably would slight that confutation, may regard the arguments of a layman, and even a poet, more than those which are drawn up by the pen of a divine and a bishop: it is for the use of these that the paper is published; who, if they learn nothing else from it, will find that Mr. Gray was not of their party, nor so great a wit as to disbelieve the existence of a Deity *.

"I will allow Lord Bolingbroke, that the moral, as well as physical, attributes of God must be known to us only à posteriori, and that this is the only real knowledge we can have either of the one or the

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* In one of his pocket-books I find a slight sketch in verse of his own character, which may, on account of one line in it, come into a note here with sufficient propriety. It was written in 1761.

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune;
He had not the method of making a fortune:
Could love, and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd;
NO VERY GREAT WIT, HE BELIEV'D IN A GOD.
A post or a pension he did not desire,
But left church and state to Charles Townshend and Squire.

This last line needs no comment for readers of the present time, and it surely is not worth while to write one on this occasion for posterity.

other; I will allow too that perhaps it may be an idle distinction which we make between them: his moral attributes being as much in his nature and essence as those we call his physical; but the occasion of our making some distinction is plainly this: his eternity, infinity, omniscience, and almighty power, are not what connect him, if I may so speak, with us his creatures. We adore him, not because he always did in every place, and always will, exist; but because he gave and still preserves to us our own existence by an exertion of his goodness. We adore him, not because he knows and can do all things, but because he made us capable of knowing and of doing what may conduct us to happiness: it is therefore his benevolence which we adore, not his greatness or power; and if we are made only to bear our part in a system, without any regard to our own particular happiness, we can no longer worship him as our all-bounteous parent: there is no meaning in the term. The idea of his malevolence (an impiety I tremble to write) must succeed. We have nothing left but our fears, and those too vain; for whither can they lead but to despair and the sad desire of annihilation? 'If, then, justice and goodness be not the same in God as in our ideas, we mean nothing when we say that God is necessarily just and good; and for the same reason it may as well be said that we know not what we mean when, according to Dr. Clarke, (Evid. 26th) we affirm that he is necessarily a wise and intelligent Being.' What then can Lord Bolingbroke mean, when he says every thing shows the wisdom of God; and yet adds, every thing does not show in like manner the goodness of God conformably to our ideas of this attribute in either? By wisdom he must only mean, that God knows and employs the fittest means to a certain end, no matter what that end may be: this indeed is a proof of knowledge and intelligence; but these alone do not constitute wisdom; the word implies the application of these fittest means to the best and kindest end: or, who will call it true wisdom?

Even amongst ourselves, it is not held as such. All the attributes then that he seems to think apparent in the constitution of things are his unity, infinity, eternity, and intelligence; from no one of which, I boldly affirm, can result any duty of gratitude or adoration incumbent on mankind, more than if He and all things round him were produced, as some have dared to think, by the necessary working of eternal matter in an infinite vacuum: for what does it avail to add intelligence to those other physical attributes, unless that intelligence be directed, not only to the good of the whole, but also to the good of every individual of which that whole is composed?

"It is therefore no impiety, but the direct contrary, to say that human justice and the other virtues, which are indeed only various applications of human benevolence, bear some resemblance to the moral attributes of the supreme Being: it is only by means of that resemblance we conceive them in him, or their effects in his works: it is by the same means only, that we comprehend those physical attributes which his lordship allows to be demonstrable: how can we form any notion of his unity, but from that unity of which we ourselves are conscious? How of his existence, but from our own consciousness of existing? How of his power, but of that power which we experience in ourselves? yet neither Lord Bolingbroke nor any other man, that thought on these subjects, ever believed that these our ideas were real and full representations of these attributes in the Divinity. They say he knows; they do not mean that he compares ideas which he acquired from sensation, and draws conclusions from them. They say he acts; they do not mean by impulse, nor as the soul acts on an organized body. They say he is omnipotent and eternal; yet on what are their ideas founded, but on our own narrow conceptions of space and duration, prolonged beyond the bounds of place and time? Either therefore there is a resemblance and analogy (however imperfect and distant) between the attributes of the Divinity and our conceptions

of them, or we cannot have any conceptions of them at all: he allows we ought to reason from earth, that we do know, to heaven, which we do not know; how can we do so but by that affinity which appears between one and the other?

"In vain then does my lord attempt to ridicule the warm but melancholy imagination of Mr. Wollaston in that fine soliloquy: 'Must I then bid my last farewell to these walks when I close these lids, and yonder blue regions and all this scene darken upon me and go out? Must I then only serve to furnish dust to be mingled with the ashes of these herds and plants, or with this dirt under my feet? Have I been set so far above them in life, only to be levelled with them in death *? No thinking head, no heart, that has the least sensibility, but must have made the same reflection; or at least must feel, not the beauty alone, but the truth of it when he hears it from the mouth of another. Now what reply will Lord Bolingbroke make to these questions which are put to him, not only by Wollaston, but by all mankind? He will tell you, that we, that is, the animals, vegetables, stones, and *other clods of earth*, are all connected in one immense design, that we are all Dramatis Personæ, in different characters, and that we were not made for ourselves, but for the action: that it is foolish, presumptuous, impious, and profane to murmur against the Almighty Author of this drama, when we feel ourselves unavoidably unhappy. On the contrary, we ought to rest our head on the soft pillow of resignation, on the immoveable rock of tranquillity; secure, that, if our pains and afflictions grow violent indeed, an immediate end will be put to our miserable being, and we shall be mingled with the dirt under our feet, a thing common to all the animal kind; and of which he who complains does not seem to have been set by his reason so far above them in life, as to deserve not

* Religion of Nature delineated, sect. 9, p. 209, quarto.

to be mingled with them in death. Such is the consolation his philosophy gives us, and such the hope on which his tranquillity was founded *."

LETTER XXXII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Sunday, April 9, 1758.

I AM equally sensible of your affliction †, and of your kindness, that made you think of me at such a moment; would to God I could lessen the one, or requite the other with that consolation which I have often received from you when I most wanted it! but your grief is too just, and the cause of it too fresh, to admit of any such endeavour. What, indeed, is all human consolation? Can it efface every little amiable word or action of an object we loved, from our memory? Can it convince us, that all the hopes we had entertained, the plans of future satisfaction we had formed, were ill-grounded and vain, only because we have lost them? The only comfort (I am afraid) that belongs to our condition, is to reflect (when time has given us leisure for reflection) that others have suffered worse; or that we ourselves might have suffered the same misfortune at times and in circumstances that

* The reader, who would choose to see the argument, as Lord Bolingbroke puts it, will find it in the 4th volume of his Philosophical Works, sect. 40, 41. His ridicule on Wollaston is in the 50th section of the same volume.

† Occasioned by the death of his eldest (and at the time his only) son.

would probably have aggravated our sorrow. You might have seen this poor child arrived at an age to fulfil all your hopes, to attach you more strongly to him by long habit, by esteem, as well as natural affection, and that towards the decline of your life, when we most stand in need of support, and when he might chance to have been your *only* support; and then by some unforeseen and deplorable accident, or some painful lingering distemper, you might have lost him. Such has been the fate of many an unhappy father! I know there is a sort of tenderness which infancy and innocence alone produce; but I think you must own the other to be a stronger and a more overwhelming sorrow. Let me then beseech you to try, by every method of avocation and amusement, whether you cannot, by degrees, get the better of that dejection of spirits, which inclines you to see every thing in the worst light possible, and throws a sort of voluntary gloom, not only over your present, but future days; as if even your situation now were not preferable to that of thousands round you; and as if your prospect hereafter might not open as much of happiness to you as to any person you know: the condition of our life perpetually instructs us to be rather slow to hope, as well as to despair; and (I know you will forgive me, if I tell you) you are often a little too hasty in both, perhaps from constitution; it is sure we have great power over our minds, when we choose to exert it; and though it be difficult to resist the mechanic impulse and bias of our own temper, it is yet possible, and still more so to delay those resolutions it inclines us to take, which we almost always have cause to repent.

You tell me nothing of Mrs. Wharton's or your own state of health: I will not talk to you more upon this subject till I hear you are both well; for for that is the grand point, and without it we may as well not think at all. You flatter me in think-

ing that any thing I can do * could at all alleviate the just concern your loss has given you; but I cannot flatter myself so far, and know how little qualified I am at present to give any satisfaction to myself on this head, and in this way, much less to you. I by no means pretend to inspiration; but yet I affirm, that the faculty, in question, is by no means voluntary; it is the result (I suppose) of a certain disposition of mind, which does not depend on one's self, and which I have not felt this long time. You that are a witness how seldom this spirit has moved me in my life, may easily give credit to what I say.

LETTER XXXIII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. PALGRAVE †.

Stoke, Sept. 6, 1758.

I DO not know how to make you amends, having neither rock, ruin, nor precipice near me to send you; they do not grow in the south: but only say the word, if you would have a compact neat box of red brick with sash windows, or a grotto made of flints and shell-work, or a walnut-tree with three mole-hills under it, stuck with honey-suckles round a basin of gold-fishes, and you shall be satisfied; they shall come by the Edinburgh coach.

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* His friend had requested him to write an epitaph on the child.

† Rector of Palgrave and Thrandeston in Suffolk. He was making a tour in Scotland when this letter was written to him.

In the mean time I congratulate you on your new acquaintance with the *savage*, the *rude*, and the *tremendous*. Pray, tell me, is it any thing like what you had read in your book, or seen in two-shilling prints? Do not you think a man may be the wiser (I had almost said the better) for going a hundred or two of miles; and that the mind has more room in it than most people seem to think, if you will but furnish the apartments? I almost envy your last month, being in a very insipid situation myself; and desire you would not fail to send me some furniture for my Gothic apartment, which is very cold at present. It will be the easier task, as you have nothing to do but transcribe your little red books, if they are not rubbed out; for I conclude you have not trusted every thing to memory, which is ten times worse than a lead-pencil: half a word fixed upon or near the spot is worth a cart-load of recollection. When we trust to the picture that objects draw of themselves on our mind, we deceive ourselves; without accurate and particular observation, it is but ill-drawn at first, the outlines are soon blurred, the colours every day grow fainter; and at last, when we would produce it to any body, we are forced to supply its defects with a few strokes of our own imagination *. God forgive me, I suppose I have done so myself before now, and misled many a good body that put their trust in me. Pray, tell me, (but with permission, and without any breach of hospitality) is it so much warmer on the other side of the Swale (as some people of honour say) than it is here? Has the singing of birds, the bleating of sheep, the

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* Had this letter nothing else to recommend it, the advice here given to the curious traveller of making all his memoranda *on the spot*, and the reasons for it are so well expressed, and withal so important, that they certainly deserve our notice.

lowing of herds, deafened you at Rainton? Did the vast old oaks and thick groves in Northumberland keep off the sun too much from you? I am too civil to extend my inquiries beyond Berwick. Every thing, doubtless, must improve upon you as you advanced northward. You must tell me, though, about Melross, Rosslin Chapel, and Arbroath. In short, your port-feuille must be so full, that I only desire a loose chapter or two, and will wait for the rest till it comes out.

LETTER XXXIV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

Stoke, Nov. 9, 1758.

I SHOULD have told you that Caradoc came safe to hand*; but my critical faculties have been so taken up in dividing *nothing* with an old woman†, that they are not yet composed enough for a better and more tranquil employment: shortly, however, I will make them obey me. But am I to send this copy to Mr. Hurd, or return it to you? Methinks I do not love this travelling to and again of manuscripts by the post. While I am writing, your second packet is just arrived. I can only tell you in gross, that there seem to me certain passages altered which might as well have been let alone; and

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* A second manuscript of Caractacus with the Odes inserted.

† Mrs. Rogers died about this time, and left Mr. Gray and Mrs. Olliffe, another of his aunts, her joint executors.

that I shall not be easily reconciled to Mador's own song *. I must not have my fancy raised to that agreeable pitch of heathenism and wild magical enthusiasm, and then have you let me drop into moral philosophy and cold good sense. I remember you insulted me when I saw you last, and affected to call that which delighted my imagination, *nonsense:* now I insist that sense is nothing in poetry, but according to the dress she wears, and the scene she appears in. If you should lead me into a superb Gothic building with a thousand clustered pillars, each of them half a mile high, the walls all covered with fretwork, and the windows full of red and blue saints that had neither head nor tail; and I should find the Venus of Medici in person perked up in a long niche over the high altar, do you think it would raise or damp my devotions? I say that Mador must be entirely a Briton; and that his pre-eminence among his companions must be shown by superior wildness, more barbaric fancy, and a more striking and deeper harmony both of words and numbers: if British antiquity be too narrow, this is the place for invention; and if it be pure invention, so much the clearer must the expression be, and so much the stronger and richer the imagery. There's for you now!

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* He means here the second ode, which was afterwards greatly altered.

LETTER XXXV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. PALGRAVE.

London, July 24, 1759.

I AM now settled in my new territories commanding Bedford gardens, and all the fields as far as Highgate and Hampstead, with such a concourse of moving pictures as would astonish you; so *rus-in-urbe-ish*, that I believe I shall stay here, except little excursions and vagaries, for a year to come. What though I am separated from the fashionable world by broad St. Giles's, and many a dirty court and alley, yet here is air, and sunshine, and quiet, however, to comfort you: I shall confess that I am basking with heat all the summer, and I suppose shall be blown down all the winter, besides being robbed every night; I trust, however, that the Musæum, with all its manuscripts and rarities by the cart-load, will make ample amends for all the aforesaid inconveniencies.

I this day past through the jaws of a great leviathan into the den of Dr. Templeman, superintendent of the reading-room, who congratulated himself on the sight of so much good company. We were, first, a man that writes for Lord Royston; 2dly, a man that writes for Dr. Burton, of York; 3dly, a man that writes for the Emperor of Germany, or Dr. Pocock, for he speaks the worst English I ever heard; 4thly, Dr. Stukely, who writes for himself, the very worst person he could write for; and, lastly, I, who only read to know if there be any thing worth writing, and that not without some difficulty. I find that they printed 1000 copies of the Harleian Catalogue, and have sold only fourscore; that they have 900*l.* a year income, and

spend 1300, and are building apartments for the under-keepers; so I expect in winter to see the collection advertised and set to auction.

Have you read Lord Clarendon's Continuation of his History? Do you remember Mr. * *'s account of it before it came out? How well he recollected all the faults, and how utterly he forgot all the beauties: surely the grossest taste is better than such a sort of delicacy.

LETTER XXXVI.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

London, June 22, 1760.

I AM not sorry to hear you are exceeding busy, except as it has deprived me of the pleasure I should have in hearing often from you; and as it has been occasioned by a little vexation and disappointment. To find one's self business, I am persuaded, is the great art of life; I am never so angry, as when I hear my acquaintance wishing they had been bred to some poking profession, or employed in some office of drudgery, as if it were pleasanter to be at the command of other people than at one's own; and as if they could not go unless they were wound up: yet I know and feel what they mean by this complaint; it proves that some spirit, something of genius (more than common) is required to teach a man how to employ himself: I say a man; for women, commonly speaking, never feel this distemper; they have always something to do; time hangs not on their hands (unless they be fine ladies); a variety of small inventions and occupations fill up the void, and their eyes are never open in vain.

As to myself, I have again found rest for the sole of my gouty foot in your old dining-room *, and hope that you will find at least an equal satisfaction at Old-Park; if your bog prove as comfortable as my oven, I shall see no occasion to pity you, and only wish you may brew no worse than I bake.

You totally mistake my talents, when you impute to me any magical skill in planting roses: I know I am no conjurer in these things; when they are done I can find fault, and that is all. Now this is the very reverse of genius, and I feel my own littleness. Reasonable people know themselves better than is commonly imagined; and therefore (though I never saw any instance of it) I believe Mason when he tells me that he understands these things. The prophetic eye of taste (as Mr. Pitt calls it) sees all the beauties, that a place is susceptible of, long before they are born; and when it plants a seedling, already sits under the shadow of it, and enjoys the effect it will have from every point of view that lies in prospect. You must therefore invoke Caractacus, and he will send his spirits from the top of Snowdon to Cross-fell or Warden-law.

I am much obliged to you for your antique news. Froissard is a favourite book of mine (though I have not attentively read him, but only dipped here and there); and it is strange to me that people, who would give thousands for a dozen portraits (originals of that time) to furnish a gallery, should never cast an eye on so many moving pictures of the life, actions, manners, and thoughts

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* The house in Southampton-row, where Mr. Gray lodged, had been tenanted by Dr. Wharton; who, on account of his ill health, left London the year before, and was removed to his paternal estate at Old-Park, near Durham.

of their ancestors, done on the spot, and in strong, though simple colours. In the succeeding century Froissard, I find, was read with great satisfaction by every body that could read; and on the same footing with King Arthur, Sir Tristram, and Archbishop Turpin: not because they thought him a fabulous writer, but because they took them all for true and authentic historians; to so little purpose was it in that age for a man to be at the pains of writing truth. Pray, are you come to the four Irish Kings that went to school to King Richard the Second's Master of the Ceremonies, and the man who informed Froissard of all he had seen in St. Patrick's Purgatory?

The town are reading the King of Prussia's poetry (*Le Philosophe sans Souci*), and I have done like the town; they do not seem so sick of it as I am: it is all the scum of Voltaire and Lord Bolingbroke, the Crambe-recocta of our worst Freethinkers, tossed up in German-French rhyme. Tristram Shandy is still a greater object of admiration, the man as well as the book; one is invited to dinner, where he dines, a fortnight before: as to the volumes yet published, there is much good fun in them, and humour sometimes hit and sometimes missed. Have you read his sermons, with his own comic figure, from a painting by Reynolds, at the head of them? They are in the style I think most proper for the pulpit *, and show a strong imagination

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* Our author was of opinion, that it was the business of the preacher rather to persuade by the power of eloquence to the practice of known duties, than to reason with the art of logic on points of controverted doctrine: hence, therefore, he thought that sometimes imagination might not be out of its place in a sermon. But let him speak for himself in an extract from one of his letters to me in the following year: 'Your quotation from Jeremy

and a sensible heart; but you see him often tottering on the verge of laughter, and ready to throw his periwig in the face of the audience.

LETTER XXXVII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. STONHEWER.

London, June 29, 1760.

THOUGH you have had but a melancholy employment, it is worthy of envy, and I hope will have all the success it deserves *. It was the best and most natural method of cure, and such as could not have been administered by any but your gentle hand. I thank you for communicating to me what must give you so much satisfaction.

I too was reading M. D'Alembert †, and (like you) am totally disappointed in his Elements. I could only taste a little of the first course: it was dry as a stick, hard as a stone, and cold as a cu-

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Taylor is a fine one. I have long thought of reading him; for I am persuaded that chopping logic in the pulpit, as our divines have done ever since the revolution, is not the thing; but that imagination and warmth of expression are in their place there, as much as on the stage; moderated, however, and chastised a little by the purity and severity of religion.

* Mr. Stonhewer was now at Houghton-le Spring, in the bishoprick of Durham, attending on his sick father, rector of that parish.

† Two subsequent volumes of his 'Melanges de Litterature et Philosophie.'

cumber. But then the letter to Rousseau is like himself; and the Discourses on Elocution, and on the Liberty of Music, are divine. He has added to his translations from Tacitus; and (what is remarkable) though that author's manner more nearly resembles the best French writers of the present age than any thing, he totally fails in the attempt. Is it his fault, or that of the language?

I have received another Scotch packet*, with a

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* Of the fragments of Erse poetry, many of which Mr. Gray saw in manuscript before they were published. In a letter to Dr. Wharton, written in the following month, he thus expresses himself on the same subject: 'If you have seen Mr. Stonhewer, he has probably told you of my old Scotch (or rather Irish) poetry: I am gone mad about them; they are said to be translations (literal and in prose) from the Erse tongue, done by one Macpherson, a young clergyman in the Highlands: he means to publish a collection he has of these specimens of antiquity, if it be antiquity; but what perplexes me is, I cannot come at any certainty on that head. I was so struck with their beauty, that I writ into Scotland to make a thousand inquiries; the letters I have in return are ill wrote, ill reasoned, unsatisfactory, calculated (one would imagine) to deceive, and yet not cunning enough to do it cleverly. In short, the whole external evidence would make one believe these fragments counterfeit; but the internal is so strong on the other side, that I am resolved to believe them genuine, spite of the devil and the kirk: it is impossible to conceive that they were written by the same man that writes me these letters; on the other hand, it is almost as hard to suppose (if they are original) that he should be able to translate them so admirably. In short, this man is the very demon of poetry, or he has lighted on a treasure hid for ages. The

third specimen, inferior in kind (because it is merely description), but yet full of nature and noble wild imagination. Five bards pass the night at the castle of a chief (himself a principal bard); each goes out in his turn to observe the face of things, and returns with an extempore picture of the changes he has seen (it is an October night, the harvest-month of the Highlands). This is the whole plan; yet there is a contrivance, and a preparation of ideas, that you would not expect. The oddest thing is, that every one of them sees ghosts (more or less). The idea, that struck and surprised me most, is the following. One of them (describing a storm of wind and rain) says,

Ghosts ride on the tempest to-night:
Sweet is their voice between the gusts of wind;
Their songs are of other worlds!

Did you never observe (*while rocking winds are piping loud*) that pause, as the gust is recollecting itself, and rising upon the ear in a shrill and plaintive note, like the swell of an Æolian harp? I do assure you there is nothing in the world so like the voice of a spirit. Thomson had an ear sometimes: he was not deaf to this; and has described it gloriously, but given it another different turn, and of more horror. I cannot repeat the lines: it is in his Winter. There is another very fine picture in one of them. It describes the breaking of the clouds after the storm, before it is settled into a calm, and when the moon is seen by short intervals.

The waves are tumbling on the lake,
And lash the rocky sides.

Welch poets are also coming to light; I have seen a discourse in manuscript about them, by one Mr. Evans, a clergyman, with specimens of their writing: this is in Latin; and though it does not approach the other, there are fine scraps among it.'

The boat is brim-full in the cove,
The oars on the rocking tide.
Sad sits a maid beneath a cliff,
And eyes the rolling stream:
Her lover promised to come,
She saw his boat (when it was evening) on the lake;
Are these his groans in the gale?
Is this his broken boat on the shore?*

LETTER XXXVIII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. CLARKE†.

Pembroke-Hall, August 12, 1750.

NOT knowing whether you are yet returned from your sea-water, I write at random to you. For me,

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* The whole of this descriptive piece has been since published in a note to a poem, entitled CROMA, (see Ossian's Poems, vol. 1st, p. 350, 8vo.) It is somewhat remarkable that the manuscript, in the translator's own hand, which I have in my possession, varies considerably from the printed copy. Some images are omitted, and others added. I will mention one which is not in the manuscript, *the spirit of the mountain shrieks*. In the tragedy of Douglas, published at least three years before, I always admired this fine line, *the angry spirit of the water shrieked*.—Quere, Did Mr. Home take this sublime image from Ossian, or has the translator of Ossian since borrowed it from Mr. Home?

† Physician at Epsom. With this gentleman Mr. Gray commenced an early acquaintance at College.

I am come to my resting-place, and find it very necessary, after living for a month in a house with three women that laughed from morning to night, and would allow nothing to the sulkiness of my disposition. Company and cards at home, parties by land and water abroad, and (what they call) *doing something*, that is, racketing about from morning to night, are occupations, I find, that wear out my spirits, especially in a situation where one might sit still, and be alone with pleasure; for the place was a hill* like Clifden, opening to a very extensive and diversified landscape, with the Thames, which is navigable, running at its foot.

I would wish to continue here (in a very different scene, it must be confessed) till Michaelmas; but I fear I must come to town much sooner. Cambridge is a delight of a place, now there is nobody in it. I do believe you would like it, if you knew what it was without inhabitants. It is they, I assure you, that get it an ill name and spoil all. Our friend Dr. * *† (one of its nuisances) is not expected here again in a hurry. He is gone to his grave with five fine mackarel (large and full of roe) in his belly. He ate them all at one dinner; but his fate was a turbot on Trinity Sunday, of which he left little for the company besides bones. He had not been hearty all the week; but after this sixth fish he never held up his head more, and a violent looseness carried him off.—They say he made a very good end.

Have you seen the Erse Fragments since they were printed? I am more puzzled than ever about their antiquity, though I still incline (against every body's opinion) to believe them old. Those you have already seen are the best; though there are some others that are excellent too.

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* Near Henley.

† Vide Letter XI. of this Section.

LETTER XXXIX.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

Cambridge, August 20, 1760.

I HAVE sent Musæus * back as you desired me, scratched here and there. And with it also a bloody satire †, written against no less persons than *you and I* by name. I concluded at first it was Mr. ***, because he is your friend and my humble servant; but then I thought he knew the world too well to call us the favourite Minions of Taste and of Fashion, especially as to Odes. For to them his ridicule is confined; so it is not he, but Mr. Colman, nephew to Lady Bath, author of the Connoisseur, a member of one of the inns of court, and a particular acquaintance of Mr. Garrick. What have you done to him? for I never heard his name before: he makes very tolerable fun with me where I understand him (which is not every where); but seems more angry with you. Lest people should not understand the humour of the thing (which indeed to do they must have our lyricisms at their finger ends) letters come out in Lloyd's Evening Post to tell them who and what it was that he meant, and says it is like to produce a great combustion in the literary world. So if you have any mind to *combustle* about it, well and good; for me, I am

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* I had desired Mr. Gray to revise my Monody on Mr. Pope's Death, in order that I might correct it for the edition I was then preparing of my Poems.

† The parodies in question, entitled Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion, were written by Messrs. Lloyd and Colman, and have been reprinted since in Mr. Lloyd's Poems.

neither so literary nor so combustible *. The Monthly Review, I see, just now has much stuff about us on this occasion. It says one of us at least has always borne his faculties meekly. I leave you to guess which of us that is; I think I know. You simpleton you! you must be meek, must you? and see what you get by it.

I do not like your improvements at Aston, it looks so like settling; if I come I will set fire to it. I will never believe the B * * s and the C * * s are dead, though I smelt them; that sort of people always live to a good old age. I dare swear they are only gone to Ireland, and we shall soon hear they are bishops.

The Erse Fragments have been published five weeks ago in Scotland, though I had them not (by a mistake) till the other day. As you tell me new things do not reach you soon at Aston, I inclose what I can; the rest shall follow, when you tell me whether you have not got the pamphlet already. I send the two to Mr. Wood which I had before, because he has not *the affectation of not admiring* †. I have another from Mr. Macpher-

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* Had Mr. Pope disregarded the sarcasms of the many writers that endeavoured to eclipse his poetical fame, as much as Mr. Gray here appears to have done, the world would not have been possessed of a Dunciad; but it would have been impressed with a more amiable idea of its author's temper. It is for the sake of showing how Mr. Gray felt on such occasions, that I publish this letter.

† It was rather a want of credulity than admiration that Mr. Gray should have laid to my charge. I suspected that, whether the Fragments were genuine or not, they were by no means literally translated. I suspect so still; and a former note gives a sufficient cause for that suspicion, See p. 366.

son, which he has not printed; it is mere description, but excellent too in its kind. If you are good and will learn to admire, I will transcribe and send it.

As to their authenticity, I have made many inquiries, and have lately procured a letter from Mr. David Hume (the historian), which is more satisfactory than any thing I have yet met with on that subject. He says,

'Certain it is that these poems are in every body's mouth in the Highlands, have been handed down from father to son, and are of an age beyond all memory and tradition. Adam Smith, the celebrated professor in Glasgow, told me, that the piper of the Argyleshire militia repeated to him all those which Mr. Macpherson had translated, and many more of equal beauty. Major Mackay (Lord Rae's brother) told me that he remembers them perfectly well; as likewise did the Laird of Macfarline (the greatest antiquarian we have in this country), and who insists strongly on the historical truth, as well as the poetical beauty of these productions. I could add the Laird and Lady Macleod, with many more, that live in different parts of the Highlands, very remote from each other, and could only be acquainted with what had become (in a manner) national works*. There

* All this external evidence and much more has since been collected and published by Dr. Blair (see his Appendix to his Critical Dissertation on the Works of Ossian); and yet notwithstanding a later Irish writer has been hardy enough to assert, that the poems in question abound with the strangest anachronisms: for instance, that Cucullin lived in the first, and Fingal in the third century; two princes who are said to have made war with the Danes, a nation never heard of in Europe till the ninth; which war could not possibly have happened till 500 years after the death of the supposed

is a country surgeon in Lochaber, who has by heart the entire epic poem mentioned by Mr. Macpherson in his preface; and, as he is old, is perhaps the only person living that knows it all, and has never committed it to writing, we are in the more haste to recover a monument, which will certainly be regarded as a curiosity in the republic of letters: we have therefore set about a subscription of a guinea or two guineas a piece, in order to enable Mr. Macpherson to undertake a mission into the Highlands to recover this poem, and other fragments of antiquity.' He adds too, that the names of Fingal, Ossian, Oscar, &c. are still given in the Highlands to large mastiffs, as we give to ours the names of Cæsar, Pompey, Hector, &c.

LETTER XL.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

London, 1761.

I REJOICE to find that you not only grow reconciled to your northern scene, but discover beauties round you that once were deformities: I am persuaded the whole matter is to have always something going forward. Happy they that can create a rose-tree, or erect a honey-suckle; that can watch

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poet who sings it. (See O'Halloran's Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland, quarto, 1772.) To whatever side of the question truth may lean, it is of little moment to me; my doubts arising (as I have said in the former note) from internal evidence only, and a want of proof of the fidelity of the translation.

the brood of a hen, or see a fleet of their own ducklings launch into the water: it is with a sentiment of envy I speak it, who never shall have even a thatched roof of my own, nor gather a strawberry but in Covent-Garden. I will not, however, believe in the *vocality* of Old-Park till next summer, when perhaps I may trust to my own ears.

The Nouvelle Héloïse cruelly disappointed me, but it has its partisans, amongst which are Mason and Mr. Hurd; for me, I admire nothing but Fingal* (I conclude you have seen it, if not, Stonhewer can lend it you); yet I remain still in doubt about the authenticity of these poems, though inclining rather to believe them genuine in spite of the world: whether they are the inventions of antiquity, or of a modern Scotchman, either case is to me alike unaccountable; *je m'y perd.*

I send you a Swedish and English Calendar †: the first column is by Berger, a disciple of Linnæus; the second by Mr. Stillingfleet; the third (very imperfect indeed) by me. You are to observe, as you tend your plantations and take your walks, how the spring advances in the north, and whether Old-Park most resembles Upsal or Stratton. The

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* In a letter to another friend, informing him that he had sent Fingal down to him, he says, 'For my part I will stick to my credulity, and if I am cheated, think it is worse for him (the translator) than for me. The epic poem is foolishly so called, yet there is a sort of plan and unity in it very strange for a barbarous age; yet what I more admire are some of the detached pieces—the rest I leave to the discussion of antiquarians and historians; yet my curiosity is much interested in their decision.' No man surely ever took more pains with himself to believe any thing than Mr Gray seems to have done on this occasion.

† See Stillingfleet's Tracts, p. 261.

latter has on one side a barren black heath, on the other a light sandy loam, all the country about it is a dead flat; you see it is necessary you should know the situation (I do not mean any reflection upon any body's place); and this is the description Mr. Stillingfleet gives of his friend Mr. Marsham's seat, to which he retires in the summer and botanizes. I have lately made an acquaintance with this philosopher, who lives in a garret here in the winter, that he may support some near relations who depend upon him; he is always employed, consequently (according to my old maxim) always happy, always cheerful, and seems to me a very worthy honest man: his present scheme is to send some persons properly qualified to reside a year or two in Attica, to make themselves acquainted with the climate, productions, and natural history of the country, that we may understand Aristotle, Theophrastus, &c. who have been heathen Greek to us for so many ages; and this he has got proposed to Lord Bute, no unlikely person to put it into execution, as he is himself a botanist.

LETTER XLI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

London, Jan. 22, 1761.

I CANNOT pity you; *au contraire,* I wish I had been at Aston, when I was foolish enough to go through the six volumes of the *Nouvelle Héloïse.* All I can say for myself is, that I was confined for three weeks at home by a severe cold, and had nothing better to do: there is no one event in it that might not happen any day of the week (separately taken) in any private family; yet these

events are so put together, that the series of them is more absurd and more improbable than Amadis de Gaul. The dramatis personæ (as the author says) are all of them good characters; I am sorry to hear it: for had they been all hanged at the end of the third volume, nobody (I believe) would have cared. In short, I went on and on, in hopes of finding some wonderful *denouement* that would set all right, and bring something like nature and interest out of absurdity and insipidity: no such thing, it grows worse and worse; and (if it be Rousseau's, which is not doubted) is the strongest instance I ever saw, that a very extraordinary man may entirely mistake his own talents. By the motto and preface, it appears to be his own story, or something similar to it *.

The Opera-house is crowded this year like any ordinary theatre. Elisi is finer than any thing that has been here in your memory: yet, as I suspect, has been finer than he is: he appears to be near forty, a little pot-bellied and thick-shouldered, otherwise no bad figure; his action proper, and not ungraceful. We have heard nothing, since I remember operas, but eternal passages, divisions, and flights of execution: of these he has absolutely none; whether merely from judgment, or a little from age, I will not affirm; his point is expression, and to that all the graces and ornaments he inserts (which are few and short) are evidently directed: he goes higher (they say) than Farinelli; but then

* If it be considered that Mr. Gray always preferred expression and sentiment to the arrangement of a story, it may seem somewhat extraordinary that the many striking beauties of these kinds, with which this singular work abounds, were not excepted from so general a censure: for my own part (to use a phrase of his own) 'they strike me blind' to all the defects which he has here enumerated.

this celestial note you do not hear above once in a whole opera; and he falls from this altitude at once to the mellowest, softest, strongest tones (about the middle of his compass) that can be heard. The Mattei, I assure you, is much improved by his example, and by her great success this winter; but then the burlettas, and the Paganina, I have not been so pleased with any thing these many years: she too is fat, and above forty, yet handsome withal, and has a face that speaks the language of all nations: she has not the invention, the fire, and the variety of action that the Spiletta had; yet she is light, agile, ever in motion, and above all graceful; but then her voice, her ear, her taste in singing: Good God—as Mr. Richardson the painter says. Pray, ask Lord * * *; for I think I have seen him there once or twice, as much pleased as I was.

LETTER XLII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

August, 1761.

BE assured your York canon never will die; so the better the thing is in value, the worse for you *. The true way to immortality is to get you nominated one's successor: age and diseases vanish at your name; fevers turn to radical heat, and fistulas to issues: it is a judgment that waits on your in-

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* This was written at a time, when, by the favour of Dr. Fountayne, dean of York, I expected to be made a residentiary in his cathedral.

satiable avarice. You could not let the poor old man die at his ease, when he was about it; and all his family (I suppose) are cursing you for it.

I wrote to Lord * * * * on his recovery; and he answers me very cheerfully, as if his illness had been but slight, and the pleurisy were no more than a hole in one's stocking. He got it (he says) not by scampering, racketing, and riding post, as I had supposed; but by going with ladies to Vauxhall. He is the picture (and pray so tell him, if you see him) of an old alderman that I knew, who, after living forty years on the fat of the land (not milk and hóney, but arrack punch and venison), and losing his great toe with a mortification, said to the last, that he owed it to two grapes, which he ate one day after dinner. He felt them lie cold at his stomach the minute they were down.

Mr. Montagu (as I guess, at your instigation) has earnestly desired me to write some lines to be put on a monument, which he means to erect at Bellisle *. It is a task I do not love, knowing Sir William Williams so slightly as I did: but he is so friendly a person, and his affliction seemed to me so real, that I could not refuse him. I have sent him the following verses, which I neither like myself, nor will he, I doubt: however, I have showed him that I wished to oblige him. Tell me your real opinion.

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* See page 44.

LETTER XLIII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, Dec. 4, 1762.

I FEEL very ungrateful every day that I continue silent; and yet now that I take my pen in hand I have only time to tell you, that of all the places which I saw in my return from you, Hardwicke pleased me the most*. One would think that Mary, Queen of Scots, was but just walked down into the park with her guard for half an hour; her gallery, her room of audience, her ante-chamber, with the very canopies, chair of state, footstool, *lit de repos*, oratory, carpets, and hangings, just as she left them: a little tattered indeed, but the more venerable; and all preserved with religious care, and papered up in winter.

When I arrived in London I found Professor Turner† had been dead above a fortnight; and being cockered and spirited up by some friends (though it was rather the latest) I got my name suggested to Lord Bute. You may easily imagine who undertook it, and indeed he did it with zeal‡. I received my answer very soon, which was what you may easily imagine, but joined with great pro-

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* A seat of the Duke of Devonshire, in Derbyshire.

† Professor of Modern Languages in the University of Cambridge.

‡ This person was the late Sir Henry Erskine. As this was the only application Mr. Gray ever made to ministry, I thought it necessary to insert his own account of it. The place in question was given to the tutor of Sir James Lowther.

fessions of his desire to serve me on future occasions, and many more fine words that I pass over, not out of modesty, but for another reason: so you see I have made my fortune like Sir Francis Wronghead. This nothing is a profound secret, and no one here suspects it even now. To-day I hear Mr. E. Delaval * has got it, but we are not yet certain; next to myself I wished for him.

You see we have made a peace. I shall be silent about it, because if I say any thing anti-ministerial, you will tell me you know the reason; and if I approve it, you will think I have my expectations still. All I know is, that the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Hardwick both say it is an excellent peace, and only Mr. Pitt calls it inglorious and insidious.

LETTER XLIV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

February 8, 1763.

DOCTISSIME Domine, anne tibi arrident *complimenta* †? If so, I hope your vanity is tickled

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* Fellow of Pembroke-Hall, and of the Royal Society.

† William Taylor Howe, Esq. of Stondon Place, near Chipping-Ongar, in Essex, an honorary Fellow of Pembroke-Hall, was now on his travels in Italy, where he had made an acquaintance with the celebrated Count Algarotti, and had recommended to him Mr. Gray's poems and my dramas. After the perusal he received a letter from the count, written in that style of superlative panegyric peculiar to

with the *verghe d'oro* of Count Algarotti, and the intended translation of Sig^r. Agostino Paradisi: for my part, I am ravished (for I too have my share). Are you upon the road to see all these wonders, and snuff up the incense of Pisa; or has Mr. Brown abated your ardour by sending you the originals? I am waiting with impatience for your coming.

I am obliged to you for your drawing and very *learned* dissertation annexed*. You have made out your point with a great degree of probability (for though the *nimis adhæsit* might startle one,

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Italians. A copy of this letter Mr. Howe had just now sent to our common friend Mr. Brown, then president of the college; and also another of the count's, addressed to Sig^r. Paradisi, a Tuscan poet; in which, after explaining the arguments of my two dramatic poems, he advises him to translate them; but principally Caractacus.—This anecdote not only explains the above paragraph, but the subsequent letter. The Latin, at the beginning of the letter, alludes to a similar expression which a fellow of a college had made use of to a foreigner who dined in the college hall. Having occasion to ask him if he would eat any cabbage to his boiled beef, he said 'anne tibi arrident herbæ?'

* This relates to the ruin of a small Gothic chapel near the north-west end of the cathedral at York, not noticed by Drake in his Eboracum. When Mr. Gray made me a visit at that place the summer before, he was much struck with the beautiful proportion of the windows in it, which induced me to get Mr. Paul Sandby to make a drawing of it; and also to endeavour, in a letter to Mr. Gray, to explain to what foundation it belonged. As his answer contains some excellent general remarks on Gothic building, I thought proper to publish it, though the particular matter which occasioned them was not of any great consequence.

yet the sale of the tithes and chapel to Webster seems to set all right again), and I do believe the building in question was the chapel of St. Sepulchre. But then, that the ruin now standing was the individual chapel as erected by Archbishop Roger, I can by no means think: I found myself merely on the style and taste of architecture. The vaults under the choir are still in being, and were undoubtedly built by this very archbishop: they are truly Saxon; only that the arches are pointed, though very obtusely. It is the south transept (not the north) that is the oldest part of the minster now above ground: it is said to have been begun by Geffery Plantagenet, who died about thirty years after Roger, and left it unfinished. His successor, Walter Grey, completed it; so we do not exactly know to which of these two prelates we are to ascribe any certain part of it. Grey lived a long time, and was archbishop from 1216 to 1255 (39 Henry III.); and in this reign it was, that the beauty of the Gothic architecture began to appear. The chapter-house is in all probability his work, and (I should suppose) built in his latter days; whereas what he did of the south transept might be performed soon after his accession. It is in the second order of this building, that the round arches appear including a row of pointed ones (which you mention, and which I also observed), similar to those in St. Sepulchre's chapel, though far inferior in the proportions and neatness of workmanship. The same thing is repeated in the north transept; but this is only an imitation of the other, done for the sake of regularity; for this part of the building is no older than Archbishop Romaine, who came to the see in 1285, and died 1295.

All the buildings of Henry the Second's time (under whom Roger lived and died, 1185) are of a clumsy and heavy proportion, with a few rude and awkward ornaments; and this style continues to the beginning of Henry the Third's reign, though

with a little improvement, as in the nave of Fountain's abbey, &c. then all at once come in the tall picked arches, the light clustered columns, the capitals of curling foliage, the fretted tabernacles and vaultings, and a profusion of statues, &c. that constitute the good Gothic style; together with decreasing and flying buttresses, and pinnacles, on the outside. Nor must you conclude any thing from Roger's own tomb, which has (I remember) a wide surbased arch with scalloped ornaments, &c.; for this can be no older than the nave itself, which was built by Archbishop Melton after the year 1315, one hundred and thirty years after Roger's death.

I have compared Helvetius and Elfrida, as you desired me *, and find thirteen parallel passages;

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* As the plagiarism, to which Mr. Gray here alludes, is but little known, and, I think, for its singularity, is somewhat curious, I shall beg the reader's patience while I dilate upon it; though I am aware it will stretch this note to an unconscionable length. M. Helvetius, in the third chapter of his third Essay de l'Esprit, which treats of the Extent of Memory, means to prove that this faculty, in the extreme, is not necessary to constitute a great genius. For this purpose he examines whether the greatness of the very different talents of Locke and of Milton ought to be considered as the effect of their possessing this talent in an extraordinary degree. He then proceeds as follows: 'As the last example of the small extent of memory necessary to a fine imagination, I shall give in a note *the translation of a piece of English poetry;* which, with the preceding, will, I believe, prove to those who would decompose the works of illustrious men, that a great genius does not necessarily suppose a great memory.' I now set down that note with references to Elfrida underneath it, and I choose to give it in the English translation printed

five of which, at least, are so direct and close as to leave no shadow of a doubt, and therefore confirm

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in 1759, that the parallel passages may be the more obvious at first sight. 'A young Virgin, awaked and guided by Love, goes before the appearance of Aurora to a valley, where she waits for the coming of her lover, who, at the rising of the sun, is to offer a sacrifice to the gods. Her soul, in the soft situation in which she is placed by the hopes of approaching happiness, indulges, while waiting for him, the pleasure of contemplating the beauties of nature, and the rising of that luminary that was to bring the object of her tenderness.' She expresses herself thus:

'*Already the sun gilds the tops of those antique oaks, and the waves of those falling torrents that roar among the rocks shine with his beams; already I perceive the summit of those shaggy mountains whence arise the vaults which, half-concealed in the air, offer a formidable retreat to the solitary who there retires* (1). Night folds up her veil. *Ye wanton fires, that mislead the wandering traveller, retire* (2) *to the* quagmires and marshy fens; and *thou sun, lord of the heavens, who fillest the air with reviving heat, who sowest with dewy pearls the flowers of these meadows, and givest colours to the varied beauties*

(1) How nobly does this venerable wood,
Gilt with the glories of the orient sun,
Embosom yon fair mansion!
—— On the shaggy mound,
Where tumbling torrents roar around;
Where pendent mountains o'er your head
Stretch a formidable shade——
Where lull'd in pious peace the hermit lies.

(2) Away, ye goblins all,
Wont the bewilder'd traveller to daunt.—

all the rest. It is a phenomenon that you will be in the right to inform yourself about, and which I

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of nature, receive my first homage (3), and hasten thy course. Thy appearance proclaims that of my lover. *Freed from the pious cares that detain him still at the foot of the altars, love will soon bring him to mine* (4). Let all around me partake of my joy. Let all bless the rising luminary by which we are enlightened. Ye flowers that inclose in your bosoms the odours that cool night condenses there, open your buds, and exhale in the air your balmy vapours. I know not whether the delightful intoxication that possesses my soul does not embellish whatever I behold; but the rivulet, that in pleasing meanders winds along this valley, enchants me with its murmurs. *Zephyrus caresses me with his breath; the fragrant plants, pressed under my feet, waft to my senses their perfume. Oh! if Felicity sometimes condescends to visit the abode of mortals, to these places, doubtless, she retires* (5). But with what secret trouble am I agitated? Already impatience mingles its poison

(3) Hail to thy living light,
Ambrosial Morn——
That bids each dewy-spangled flow'ret rise,
And dart around its vermil dies——
Unfolds the scene of glory to our eye,
Where, throned in artless majesty,
The cherub Beauty sits on Nature's rustic shrine.

(4) 'Twill not be long, ere his unbending mind
Shall lose in sweet oblivion every care
Among th' embowering shades that veil Elfrida.

(5) The soft air
Salutes me with most cool and temperate breath,
And, as I tread, the flow'r-besprinkled lawn
Sends up a gale of fragrance. I should guess,
If e'er Content deign'd visit mortal clime,
This was her place of dearest residence.

long to understand. Another phenomenon is, that I read it without finding it out: all I remember is,

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with the sweetness of my expectation. This valley has already lost all its beauties. Is joy then so fleeting? *It is as easy to snatch it from us, as for the light down of these plants to be blown away by the breath of the Zephyrs* (6). In vain have I recourse to flattering hope. Each moment increases my disturbance. He will come no more. Who keeps him at a distance from me? What duty more sacred than that of calming the inquietudes of love! But what do I say? *Fly jealous suspicions, injurious to his fidelity* (7), and formed to extinguish my tenderness. *If jealousy grows by the side of love, it will stifle it, if not pulled up by the roots; it is the ivy which, by a verdant chain, embraces, but dries up the trunk which serves for its support* (8). I know my lover too well to doubt of his tenderness. He, like me, has, far from the pomp of courts, sought the tranquil asylum of the fields. Touched by the simplicity of my heart, and by my beauty, my sensual rivals call him in vain to their arms. Shall he be seduced by the advances of coquetry, *which, on the cheek of the young maid, tarnishes the snow of innocence and the carnation of modesty, and daubs it with the*

(6) For safety now sits wav'ring on your love,
Like the light down upon the thistle's beard,
Which ev'ry breeze may part.

(7) Avaunt! ye vain delusive fears.

(8) See, Elfrida;
Ah see! how round yon branching elm the *ivy*
Clasps its *green chain*, and poisons what supports it.
Not less injurious to the shoots of love
Is sickly jealousy.

that I thought it not at all *English*, and did not much like it; and the reason is plain, for the lyric

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whiteness of art and the paint of effrontery (9)? What do I say? his contempt for her is perhaps only a snare for me. Can I be ignorant of the partiality of men, and the arts they employ to seduce us? Nourished in a contempt for our sex, it is not us, it is their pleasures that they love. Cruel as they are, they have placed in the rank of the virtues the barbarous fury of revenge, and the mad love of their country; but never have they reckoned fidelity among the virtues. Without remorse they abuse innocence, and often their vanity contemplates our griefs with delight. But no; fly far from me, ye odious thoughts, my lover will come! A thousand times have I experienced it: *as soon as I perceive him my agitated mind is calm, and I often forget the too just cause I have for complaint; for near him I can only know happiness* (10). Yet if he is treacherous to me; if, in the very moment when my love excuses him, he consummates the crime of infidelity in another bosom, may all nature take up arms in revenge! may he perish! What do I say? *Ye elements, be deaf to my cries! Thou earth, open not thy profound abyss! let the monster walk the time prescribed him on thy splendid surface, let him*

(9) —— To guard
Your beauties from the blast of courtly gales.
The crimson blush of virgin modesty,
The delicate soft tints of innocence,
There all fly off, and leave no boast behind
But well-ranged, faded features.

(10) —— My truant heart
Forgets each lesson that resentment taught,
And in thy sight knows only to be happy.

In the French it is more literal, ‘ Pres de lui je ne scâis qu' etre heureuse.’

flights and choral flowers suited not in the least with the circumstances or character of the speaker, as he had contrived it.

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still commit new crimes, and still cause the tears of the too credulous maids to flow; and if Heaven avenges them and punishes him, may it at least be at the prayer of some other unfortunate woman (11).'

Here ends this odd instance of plagiarism. When M. Helvetius was in England, a year or two after I had made the discovery of it, I took my measures (as Mr. Gray advised me) to learn how he came by it; and accordingly requested two noblemen, to whom he was introduced, to ask him some questions concerning it; but I could gain no satisfactory answer. I do not, however, by any means, suppose that the person who cooked up the disjointed parts of my drama into this strange fricasee was M. Helvetius himself; I rather imagine (as I did from the first) that he was imposed upon by some young English traveller, who contrived this expedient in order to pass with him for a poet. The great philosopher, it is true, has in this note been proved to be *the receiver of stolen goods;* but out of respect to his numerous fashionable disciples, both abroad and at home, whose credit might suffer with that of their master, I acquit him of what would only be held criminal at the Old Bailey, that he received these goods *knowing them to be stolen.*

(11) Till then, ye elements, rest; and thou, firm earth,
Ope not thy yawning jaws; but let this monster
Stalk his due time on thine affrighted surface:
Yes, let him still go on, still execute
His savage purposes, and daily make
More widows weep, as I do.

LETTER XLV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BROWN *.

February 17, 1763.

YOU will make my best acknowledgments to Mr. Howe; who, not content to rank me in the number of his friends, is so polite as to make excuses for having done me that honour.

I was not born so far from the sun, as to be ignorant of Count Algarotti's name and reputation; nor am I so far advanced in years, or in philosophy, as not to feel the warmth of his approbation. The odes in question, as their motto shows, were meant to be *vocal to the intelligent alone*. How few they were in my own country, Mr. Howe can testify; and yet my ambition was terminated by that small circle. I have good reason to be proud, if my voice has reached the ear and apprehension of a stranger, distinguished as one of the best judges in Europe.

I am equally pleased with the just applause he bestows on Mr. Mason; and particularly on his Caractacus, which is the work of a man: whereas Elfrida is only that of a boy, a promising boy indeed, and of no common genius; yet this is the popular performance, and the other little known in comparison.

Neither Count Algarotti nor Mr. Howe (I believe) have heard of Ossian, the son of Fingal. If Mr. Howe were not upon the wing, and on his way homewards, I would send it to him in Italy. He would there see that Imagination dwelt many hundred years ago, in all her pomp, on the cold and

* Now master of Pembroke-hall.

barren mountains of Scotland. The truth (I believe) is, that, without any respect of climates, she reigns in all nascent societies of men, where the necessities of life force every one to think and act much for himself*.

LETTER XLVI.

COUNT ALGAROTTI TO MR. GRAY.

Pisa, 24 Aprile, 1763.

SONO stato lungo tempo in dubbio se un dilettante quale io sono, dovea mandare alcune sue coserelle a un professore quale è V. S. illustrissimo, a un arbitro di ogni poetica eleganza. Nè ci volea meno che l'autorità del valorissimo Signor How per persuadermi a ciò fare. V. S. illustrissimo accolga queste mie coserelle con quella medesima bontà con cui ha voluto accogliere quella lettera che dice pur poco delle tante cose, che fanno sentire alle anime armoniche di ammirabili suoi versi. Io saro

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* One is led to think from this paragraph that the scepticism, which Mr. Gray had expressed before, concerning these works of Ossian, was now entirely removed (p. 364). I know no way of accounting for this (as he had certainly received no stronger evidence of their authenticity) but from the turn of his studies at the time. He had of late much busied himself in antiquities, and consequently had imbibed too much of the spirit of a professed antiquarian; now we know, from a thousand instances, that no set of men are more willingly duped than these, especially by any thing that comes to them under the fascinating form of a new discovery.

per quanto io porrò, *Præco laudum tuarum*, e quella mia lettera si stamperà in un nuovo giornale, che si fa in Venezia, intitolato *la Minerva*, perche sappia la Italia che la Inghilterra, ricca di un * Omero, di uno † Archimede, di un ‡ Demostene, non manca del suo Pindaro. Al Signor How le non saprei dire quanti obblighi io abbia, ma si maggiore è certamente quello di avermi presentato alla sua musa, e di avermi procurato la occasione di poterla assicurare della perfetta ed altissima stima, con cui io ho l'honore di sottescrivermi,

De V. S. illustrissimo

Devotis, &c.

ALGAROTTI.

LETTER XLVII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Pembroke-hall, Aug. 5, 1763.

YOU may well wonder at my long taciturnity. I wonder too, and know not what cause to assign; for it is certain I think of you daily. I believe it is owing to the nothingness of my history; for except six weeks that I passed in town towards the end of the spring, and a little jaunt to Epsom and Box-hill, I have been here time out of mind, in a place where no events grow, though we preserve those of former days, by way of *hortus siccus* in our libraries.

I doubt you have not yet read Rousseau's Emile. Every body that has children should read it more

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* Milton. † Newton. ‡ Mr. Pitt.

than once; for though it abounds with his usual glorious absurdity, though his general scheme of education be an impracticable chimera, yet there are a thousand lights struck out, a thousand important truths better expressed than ever they were before, that may be of service to the wisest men. Particularly I think he has observed children with more attention, and knows their meaning and the working of their little passions better than any other writer. As to his religious discussions, which have alarmed the world, and engaged their thoughts more than any other part of his book, I set them all at nought, and wish they had been omitted *.

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* That I may put together the rest of Mr. Gray's sentiments concerning this singular writer, I insert here an extract from a letter of later date, written to myself. 'I have not read the Philosophic Dictionary. I can now stay with great patience for any thing that comes from Voltaire. They tell me it is frippery, and blasphemy, and wit. I could have forgiven myself if I had not read Rousseau's Lettres de la Montagne. Always excepting the Contract Social, it is the dullest performance he ever published. It is a weak attempt to separate the miracles from the morality of the gospel. The latter (he would have you think) he believes was sent from God; and the former he very explicitly takes for an imposture: this is in order to prove the cruelty and injustice of the state of Geneva in burning his Emile. The latter part of his book is to show the abuses that have crept into the constitution of his country, which point (if you are concerned about it) he makes out very well; and his intention in this is plainly to raise a tumult in the city, and to be revenged on the *Petit Conseil*, who condemned his writings to the flames.'

LETTER XLVIII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. PALGRAVE *.

March, 1765.

MY instructions, of which you are so desirous, are two-fold: the first part relates to what is past, and that will be rather diffuse: the second, to what is to come; and that we shall treat more succinctly, and with all due brevity.

First, when you come to Paris you will not fail to visit the cloister of the Chartreuse, where Le Sueur (in the history of St. Bruno) has almost equalled Raphael. Then your gothic inclinations will naturally lead you to the Sainte Chapelle built by St. Louis: in the treasury is preserved one of the noblest gems of the Augustan age. When you take a trip into the country, there is a fine old chapel at Vincennes with admirable painted windows; and at Fontainbleau, the remains of Francis the First's magnificence might give you some pleasure. In your way to Lyons you will take notice of the view over the Saone, from about Tournus and Macon. Fail not to walk a few miles along the banks of the Rhone, down the river. I would certainly make a little journey to the Grande Chartreuse, up the mountains: at your return out of Italy this will have little effect. At Turin you will visit the Capuchins' convent just without the city, and the Superga at no great distance, for the sake of the views. At Genoa observe the Terreno of the Palace Brignoli, as a model of an apartment elegantly disposed in a hot climate. At Parma

* Mr. Gray's correspondent was now making the tour of France and Italy.

you will adore the great Madonna and St. Jerom, once at St. Antonio Abbate, but now (I am told) in the ducal palace. In the Madonna della Steccata observe the Moses breaking the tables, a chiaro-scuro figure of the Parmeggiano at too great a height, and ill lighted, but immense. At the Capuchins, the great Pietà of Annib. Caracci; in the Villa Ducale, the room painted by Carlo Cignani; and the last works of Agostino Caracci at Modena *. I

* When our author was himself in Italy, he studied with much attention the different manners of the old masters. I find a paper written at the time in which he has set down several subjects proper for painting, which he had never seen executed, and has affixed the names of different masters to each piece, to show which of their pencils he thought would have been most proper to treat it. As I doubt not but this paper will be an acceptable present to the Reynoldses and Wests of the age, I shall here insert it.

'An Altar-piece.—Guido.

The top, a heaven; in the middle, at a distance, the Padre-Eterno indistinctly seen, and lost, as it were, in glory. On either hand, angels of all degrees in attitudes of adoration and wonder. A little lower, and next the eye, supported on the wings of seraphs, Christ (the principal figure) with an air of calm and serene majesty, his hand extended, as commanding the elements to their several places: near him an angel of superior rank bearing the golden compasses (that Milton describes); beneath, the chaos, like a dark and turbulent ocean, only illumined by the spirit, who is brooding over it.

A small picture.—Correggio.

Eve newly created, admiring her own shadow in the lake.

The famous Venus of this master, now in the possession of Sir William Hamilton, proves how

know not what remains now; the flower of the collection is gone to Dresden. Bologna is too vast

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judiciously Mr. Gray fixed upon his pencil for the execution of this charming subject. M.

Another.—Domenichino.

Medea in a pensive posture, with revenge and maternal affection striving in her visage; her two children at play, sporting with one another before her. On one side a bust of Jason, to which they bear some resemblance.

A statue.—Michael Angelo.

Agave in the moment she returns to her senses; the head of her son, fallen on the ground from her hand.

Vide Ovid. Met. lib. iii. l. 701, &c. M.

A picture.—Salvator Rosa.

Æneas and the Sybil sacrificing to Pluto by torch-light in the wood, the assistants in a fright. The day beginning to break, so as dimly to show the mouth of the cavern.

Sigismonda with the heart of Guiscardo before her. I have seen a small print on this subject, where the expression is admirable, said to be graved from a picture of Correggio.

Afterwards, when he had seen the original in the possession of the late Sir Luke Schaub, he always expressed the highest admiration of it; though we see, by his here giving it to Salvator Rosa, he thought the subject too horrid to be treated by Correggio; and indeed I believe it is agreed that the capital picture in question is not of his hand. M.

Another.—Albano, or the Parmeggiano.

Iphigenia asleep by the fountain-side, her maids about her; Cymon gazing and laughing.

This subject has been often treated; once indeed very curiously by Sir Peter Lely, in the way of portrait, when his sacred Majesty Charles the Second represented Cymon, and the Duchess

a subject for me to treat: the palaces and churches are open; you have nothing to do but to see them all. In coming down the Apennine you will see (if the sun shines) all Tuscany before you. And so I have brought you to Florence, where to be sure there is nothing worth seeing. Secondly,

1. Vide, quodcunque videndum est.
2. Quodcunque ego non vidi, id tu vide.

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of Cleveland and Mrs. Eleanor Gwin (in as indecent attitudes as his royal taste could prescribe) were Iphigenia and her attendants. M.

Another.—Domenichino, or the Caracci.

Electra with the urn, in which she imagined were her brother's ashes, lamenting over them; Orestes smothering his concern.

Another.—Correggio.

Ithuriel and Zephon entering the bower of Adam and Eve; they sleeping. The light to proceed from the angels.

Another.—Nicholas Poussin.

Alcestis dying; her children weeping, and hanging upon her robe; the youngest of them, a little boy, crying too, but appearing rather to do so, because the others are afflicted, than from any sense of the reason of their sorrow: her right arm should be round this, her left extended towards the rest, as recommending them to her lord's care; he fainting, and supported by the attendants.

Salvator Rosa.

Hannibal passing the Alps; the mountaineers rolling down rocks upon his army; elephants tumbling down the precipices.

Another.—Domenichino.

Arria giving Claudius's order to Pætus, and stabbing herself at the same time.

N. Poussin, or Le Sueur.

Virginius murdering his daughter; Appius at a distance, starting up from his tribunal; the people amazed, but few of them seeing the action itself.'

3. Quodcunquo videris, scribe et describe; memoriæ ne fide.
4. Scribendo nil admirare; et cum pictor non sis, verbis omnia depinge.
5. Tritam viatorum compitam calca, et cum poteris, desere.
6. Eme, quodcunque emendum est; I do not mean pictures, medals, gems, drawings, &c. only; but clothes, stockings, shoes, handkerchiefs, little moveables; every thing you may want all your life long; but have a care of the custom-house.

Pray present my most respectful compliments to Mr. Weddell *. I conclude when the winter is over, and you have seen Rome and Naples, you will strike out of the beaten path of English travellers, and see a little of the country, throw yourselves into the bosom of the Apennine, survey the horrid lake of Amsanctus (look in Cluver's Italy), catch the breezes on the coast of Taranto and Salerno, expatiate to the very toe of the continent, perhaps strike over the Faro of Messina, and having measured the gigantic columns of Girgenti, and the tremendous caverns of Syracusa, refresh yourselves amidst the fragrant vale of Enna. Oh! che bel riposo! Addio.

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* William Weddell, Esq. of Newby in Yorkshire.

LETTER XLIX.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BEATTIE*.

Glames-castle, Sept. 8, 1765.

A LITTLE journey I have been making to Arbroath has been the cause that I did not answer your very obliging letter so soon as I ought to have done. A man of merit, that honours me with his esteem, and has the frankness to tell me so, doubtless can need no excuses: his apology is made, and we are already acquainted, however distant from each other.

I fear I cannot (as I would wish) do myself the pleasure of waiting on you at Aberdeen, being under an engagement to go to-morrow to Taymouth, and, if the weather will allow it, to the Blair of Athol: this will take up four or five days, and at my return the approach of winter will scarce permit me to think of any farther expeditions northwards. My stay here will, however, be a fortnight or three weeks longer; and if in that time any business or invitation should call you this way, Lord Strathmore gives me commission to say, he shall be extremely glad to see you at Glames; and doubt not it will be a particular satisfaction to me to receive and thank you in person for the favourable sentiments you have entertained of me, and the civilities with which you have honoured me.

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* Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in the Marischal College, Aberdeen.

LETTER L.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Glames-castle, Sept. 14, 1765.

I DEFERRED writing to you till I had seen a little more of this country than you yourself had seen; and now being just returned from an excursion, which I and Major Lyon have been making into the Highlands, I sit down to give you an account of it. But first I must return to my journey hither, on which I shall be very short; partly because you know the way as far as Edinburgh, and partly that there was not a great deal worth remarking. The first night we passed at Tweedmouth (77 miles); the next at Edinburgh (53 miles); where Lord Strathmore left the Major and me, to go to Lenox-Love, (Lord Blantyre's) where his aunt lives: so that afternoon and all next day I had leisure to visit the Castle, Holyrood-House, Heriot's Hospital, Arthur's Seat, &c. and am not sorry to have seen that most picturesque (at a distance), and nastiest (when near), of all capital cities. I supped with Dr. Robertson and other literati, and the next morning Lord Strathmore came for us. We crossed at the Queen's Ferry in a four-oared yawl without a sail, and were tossed about rather more than I should wish to hazard again; lay at Perth, a large Scotch town with much wood about it, on the banks of the Tay, a very noble river. Next morning ferried over it, and came by dinner-time to Glames; being (from Edinburgh) 67 miles, which makes in all (from Hetton) 197 miles. The castle* stands in Strathmore (i. e.

* This is said to be the very castle in which Duncan was murdered by Macbeth.

the Great Valley) which winds about from Stonehaven on the east coast of Kincardineshire, obliquely, as far as Stirling, near 100 miles in length, and from seven to ten miles in breadth, cultivated every where to the foot of the hills, on either hand, with oats or bere, a species of barley, except where the soil is mere peat-earth, (black as a coal) or barren sand covered only with broom and heath, or a short grass fit for sheep. Here and there appear, just above ground, the huts of the inhabitants, which they call towns, built of, and covered with, turf; and among them, at great distances, the gentlemen's houses, with inclosures and a few trees round them.

Amidst these the Castle of Glames distinguishes itself, the middle part of it rising proudly out of what seems a great and thick wood of tall trees, with a cluster of hanging towers on the top. You descend to it gradually from the south, through a double and triple avenue of Scotch firs 60 or 70 feet high, under three gateways. This approach is a full mile long; and when you have passed the second gate, the firs change to limes, and another oblique avenue goes off on either hand towards the offices. These, as well as all the inclosures that surround the house, are bordered with three or four ranks of sycamores, ashes, and white poplars of the noblest height, and from 70 to 100 years old. Other alleys there are, that go off at right angles with the long one; small groves, and walled gardens, of Earl Patrick's planting, full of broad-leaved elms, oaks, birch, black cherry-trees, laburnums, &c. all of great stature and size, which have not till this week begun to show the least sense of morning frosts. The third gate delivers you into a court with a broad pavement, and grass-plats adorned with statues of the four Stuart Kings, bordered with old silver firs and yew-trees alternately, and opening with an iron palisade on either side to two square old-fashioned parterres surrounded by stone fruit-walls. The house, from

the height of it, the greatness of its mass, the many towers atop, and the spread of its wings, has really a very singular and striking appearance, like nothing I ever saw. You will comprehend something of its shape from the plan of the second floor, which I inclose. The wings are about 50 feet high; the body (which is the old castle, with walls 10 feet thick) is near 100. From the leads I see to the south of me (just at the end of the avenue) the little town of Glames, the houses built of stone, and slated, with a neat kirk and small square tower (a rarity in this region). Just beyond it rises a beautiful round hill, and another ridge of a longer form adjacent to it, both covered with woods of tall fir. Beyond them, peep over the black hills of Sid-law, over which winds the road to Dundee. To the north, within about seven miles of me, begin to rise the Grampians, hill above hill, on whose tops three weeks ago I could plainly see some traces of the snow that fell in May last. To the east, winds a way to the Strath, such as I have before described it, among the hills, which sink lower and lower as they approach the sea. To the west, the same valley (not plain, but broken, unequal ground) runs on for above 20 miles in view: there I see the crags above Dunkeld; there Beni-Gloe and Beni-More rise above the clouds; and there is that She-khallian, that spires into a cone above them all, and lies at least 45 miles (in a direct line) from this place.

Lord Strathmore, who is the greatest farmer in this neighbourhood, is from break of day to dark night among his husbandmen and labourers: he has near 2000 acres of land in his own hands, and is at present employed in building a low wall of four miles long, and in widening the bed of the little river Deane, which runs to south and south-east of the house, from about twenty to fifty feet wide, both to prevent inundations, and to drain the lake of Forfar. This work will be two years more in completing, and must be three miles in length. All

the Highlanders that can be got are employed in it; many of them know no English, and I hear them singing Erse songs all day long. The price of labour is eight-pence a day; but to such as will join together, and engage to perform a certain portion in a limited time, two shillings.

I must say that all his labours seem to prosper; and my lord has casually found in digging such quantities of shell-marl, as not only fertilize his own grounds, but are disposed of at a good price to all his neighbours. In his nurseries are thousands of oaks, beech, larches, horse-chestnuts, spruce-firs, &c. thick as they can stand, and whose only fault is, that they are grown tall and vigorous before he has determined where to plant them out; the most advantageous spot we have for beauty lies west of the house, where (when the stone walls of the meadows are taken away) the grounds, naturally unequal, will have a very park-like appearance: they are already full of trees, which need only thinning here and there to break the regularity of their trout-stream which joins the river Deane hard by. Pursuing the course of this brook upwards, you come to a narrow sequestered valley sheltered from all winds, through which it runs murmuring among great stones; on one hand the ground gently rises into a hill, on the other are the rocky banks of the rivulet almost perpendicular, yet covered with sycamore, ash, and fir, that (though it seems to have no place or soil to grow in) yet has risen to a good height, and forms a thick shade: you may continue along this gill, and passing by one end of the village and its church for half a mile, it leads to an opening between the two hills covered with fir-woods, that I mentioned above, through which the stream makes its way, and forms a cascade of ten or twelve feet over broken rocks. A very little art is necessary to make all this a beautiful scene. The weather, till the last week, has been in general very fine and warm; we have had no fires till now, and often have sat with

the windows open an hour after sun-set: now and then a shower has come, and sometimes sudden gusts of wind descend from the mountains, that finish as suddenly as they arose; but to-day it blows a hurricane. Upon the whole, I have been exceeding lucky in my weather, and particularly in my Highland expedition of five days.

We set out then the 11th of September, and continuing along the Strath to the west, passed through *Megill*, (where is the tomb of *Queen Wanders, that was riven to dethe by staned horses for nae gude that she did;* so the women there told me, I assure you) through Cowper of Angus: over the river Ila; then over a wide and dismal heath, fit for an assembly of witches, till we came to a string of four small lakes in a valley, whose deep blue waters and green margin, with a gentleman's house or two seated on them in little groves, contrasted with the black desert in which they were inchased. The ground now grew unequal; the hills, more rocky, seemed to close in upon us, till the road came to the brow of a steep descent, and (the sun then setting) between two woods of oak we saw far below us the river Tay come sweeping along at the bottom of a precipice, at least 150 feet deep, clear as glass, full to the brim, and very rapid in its course; it seemed to issue out of woods thick and tall, that rose on either hand, and were over-hung by broken rocky crags of vast height; above them, to the west, the tops of higher mountains appeared, on which the evening clouds reposed. Down by the side of the river, under the thickest shades, is seated the town of Dunkeld; in the midst of it stands a ruined cathedral, the towers and shell of the building still entire: a little beyond it, a large house of the Duke of Athol, with its offices and gardens, extends a mile beyond the town; and as his grounds were interrupted by the streets and roads, he has flung arches of communication across them, that add to the scenery of the place, which of itself

is built of good white stone, and handsomely slated; so that no one would take it for a Scotch town till they come into it. Here we passed the night; if I told you how, you would bless yourself.

Next day we set forward to Taymouth, 27 miles farther west; the road winding through beautiful woods, with the Tay almost always in full view to the right, being here from 3 to 400 feet over. The Strath-Tay, from a mile to three miles or more wide, covered with corn, and spotted with groups of people, then in the midst of their harvest; on either hand a vast chain of rocky mountains that changed their face and opened something new every hundred yards, as the way turned, or the clouds passed: in short, altogether it was one of the most pleasing days I have passed these many years, and at every step I wished for you. At the close of day we came to *Balloch**, so the place was called; but now *Taymouth*, improperly enough; for here it is that the river issues out of Loch-Tay, a glorious lake 15 miles long and one mile and a half broad, surrounded with prodigious mountains; there on its north-eastern brink, impending over it, is the vast hill of Lawers; to the east is that enormous creature, *She-khallian* (i. e. the maiden's pap) spiring above the clouds: directly west, beyond the end of the lake, *Beni-More*, the great mountain rises to a most awful height, and looks down on the tomb of Fingal. Lord Breadalbane's *policy* (so they call here all such ground as is laid out for pleasure) takes in about 2000 acres, of which his house, offices, and a deer-park, about three miles round, occupy the plain or bottom, which is little above a mile in breadth; through it winds the Tay, which, by means of a bridge, I found here to be 156 feet over: his plantations and woods rise with the ground, on

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* Mr. Pennant, in his tour in Scotland, explains this word "the Mouth of the Loch."

either side the vale, to the very summit of the enormous crags that overhang it: along them, on the mountain's side, runs a terrace a mile and a half long, that overlooks the course of the river. From several seats and temples perched on particular rocky eminences, you command the lake for many miles in length, which turns like some huge river, and loses itself among the mountains that surround it; at its eastern extremity, where the river issues out of it, on a peninsula my lord has built a neat little town and church with a high square tower; and just before it lies a small round island in the lake, covered with trees, amongst which are the ruins of some little religious house.

Trees, by the way, grow here to great size and beauty. I saw four old chestnuts in the road, as you enter the park, of vast bulk and height; one beech tree I measured that was 16 feet 7 inches in the girth, and, I guess, near 80 feet in height. The gardener presented us with peaches, nectarines, and plums from the stone walls of the kitchen-garden (for there are no brick nor hot walls); the peaches were good, the rest well tasted, but scarce ripe; we had also golden pippins from an espalier, not ripe, and a melon very well flavoured and fit to cut: of the house I have little to say; it is a very good nobleman's house, handsomely furnished and well kept, very comfortable to inhabit, but not worth going far to see. Of the earl's taste I have not much more to say; it is one of those noble situations that man cannot spoil: it is however certain, that he has built an inn and a town just where his principal walks should have been, and in the most wonderful spot of ground that perhaps belongs to him. In this inn however we lay; and next day returning down the river four miles, we passed it over a fine bridge, built at the expense of the government, and continued our way to *Logie-Rait*, just below which, in a most charming scene, the *Tummel*, which is here the larger river of the two,

falls into the Tay. We ferried over the Tummel in order to get into Marshal Wade's road, which leads from Dunkeld to Inverness, and continued our way along it toward the north: the road is excellent, but dangerous enough in conscience; the river often running directly under us at the bottom of a precipice 200 feet deep, sometimes masked indeed by wood that finds means to grow where I could not stand, but very often quite naked and without any defence; in such places we walked for miles together, partly for fear, and partly to admire the beauty of the country, which the beauty of the weather set off to the greatest advantage: as evening came on, we approached the pass of Gillikrankie, where, in the year 1745, the Hessians, with their prince at their head, stopped short, and refused to march a foot farther.

Vestibulum ante ipsum, primisque in faucibus Orci stands the solitary mansion of Mr. Robertson of Fascley; close by it rises a hill covered with oak, with grotesque masses of rock staring from among their trunks, like the sullen countenances of Fingal and all his family, frowning on the little mortals of modern days: from between this hill and the adjacent mountains, pent in a narrow channel, comes roaring out the river Tummel, and falls headlong down involved in white foam which rises into a mist all round it: but my paper is deficient, and I must say nothing of the pass itself, the black river Garry, the Blair of Athol, Mount Beni-Gloe, my return by another road to Dunkeld, the Hermitage, the *Stra-Bram*, and the Rumbling Brig: in short, since I saw the Alps, I have seen nothing sublime till now. In about a week I shall set forward, by the Stirling road, on my return all alone. Pray for me till I see you, for I dread Edinburgh and the itch, and expect to find very little in my way worth the perils I am to endure.

LETTER LI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BEATTIE.

Glames-castle, Oct. 2, 1765.

I MUST beg you would present my most grateful acknowledgments to your society for the public mark of their esteem, which you say they are disposed to confer on me*. I embrace, with so deep and just a sense of their goodness, the substance of that honour they do me, that I hope it may plead my pardon with them if I do not accept the form. I have been, Sir, for several years a member of the University of Cambridge, and formerly (when I had some thoughts of the profession) took a Bachelor of Laws' degree there; since that time, though long qualified by my standing, I have always neglected to finish my course, and claim my Doctor's degree: judge, therefore, whether it will not look like a slight, and some sort of contempt, if I receive the same degree from a sister University. I certainly would avoid giving any offence to a set of men, among whom I have passed so many easy, and I may say, happy hours of my life; yet shall ever retain in my memory the obligations you have laid me under, and be proud of my connexion with the University of Aberdeen.

It is a pleasure to me to find that you are not offended with the liberties I took when you were

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* The Marischal College of Aberdeen had desired to know whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Gray to receive from them the degree of Doctor of Laws. Mr. Beattie wrote to him on the subject, and this is the answer.

at Glames; you took me too literally, if you thought I meant in the least to discourage you in your pursuit of poetry: all I intended to say was, that if either vanity (that is, a general and undistinguishing desire of applause), or interest, or ambition has any place in the breast of a poet, he stands a great chance in these our days of being severely disappointed; and yet, after all these passions are suppressed, there may remain in the mind of one, 'ingenti perculsus amore,' (and such I take you to be) incitements of a better sort, strong enough to make him write verse all his life, both for his own pleasure and that of all posterity.

I am sorry for the trouble you have had to gratify my curiosity and love of superstition *; yet I heartily thank you. On Monday, Sir, I set forward on my way to England; where if I can be of any little use to you, or should ever have the good fortune to see you, it will be a particular satisfaction to me. Lord Strathmore and the family here desire me to make their compliments to you.

P. S. Remember Dryden, and be blind to all his faults †.

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* Mr. Gray, when in Scotland, had been very inquisitive after the popular superstitions of the country; his correspondent sent him two books on this subject, foolish ones indeed, as might be expected, but the best that could be had; a History of Second-sight, and a History of Witches.

† Mr. Beattie, it seems, in their late interview, had expressed himself with less admiration of Dryden than Mr. Gray thought his due. He told him in reply, 'that if there was any excellence in his own numbers, he had learned it wholly from that great poet; and pressed him with great earnestness to study him, as his choice of words and versification were singularly happy and harmonious.'

LETTER LII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Pembroke-Hall, March 5, 1766.

I AM amazed at myself when I think I have never wrote to you; to be sure it is the sin of witchcraft, or something worse. Had I been married, like Mason, some excuse might be made for it; who (for the first time since that great event) has just thought fit to tell me that he never passed so happy a winter as the last, and this in spite of his anxieties, which he says might even make a part of his happiness; for his wife is by no means in health, she has a constant cough: yet he is assured her lungs are not affected, and that it is nothing of the consumptive kind. As to me, I have been neither happy nor miserable; but in a gentle stupefaction of mind, and very tolerable health of body hitherto. If they last, I shall not much complain. The accounts one has lately had from all parts make me suppose you buried in the snow like the old Queen of Denmark. As soon as you are dug out, I shall rejoice to hear your voice from the battlements of Old Park.

Every thing is politics. There are no literary productions worth your notice, at least of our country. The French have finished their great Encyclopedia in 17 volumes; but there are many flimsy articles very hastily treated, and great incorrectness of the press. There are now 13 volumes of Buffon's Natural History; and he is not come to the monkeys yet, who are a numerous people. The Life of Petrarch has entertained me; it is not well written, but very curious, and laid together

from his own letters, and the original writings of the fourteenth century; so that he takes in much of the history of those obscure times, and the characters of many remarkable persons. There are two volumes quarto; and another, unpublished yet, will complete it.

Mr. Walpole writes me now and then a long and lively letter from Paris; to which place he went last year with the gout upon him, sometimes in his limbs, often in his stomach and head. He has got somehow well, (not by means of the climate, one would think) goes to all public places, sees all the best company, and is very much in fashion. He says he sunk like Queen Eleanor at Charing-Cross, and has risen again at Paris. He returns in April. I saw the lady you inquire after, when I was last in London, and a prodigious fine one she is. She had a strong suspicion of rouge on her cheeks, a cage of foreign birds and a piping bullfinch at her elbow; two little dogs on a cushion in her lap, and a cockatoo on her shoulder: they were all exceeding glad to see me, and I them.

LETTER LIII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Pembroke-Hall, Aug. 26, 1766.

WHATEVER my pen may do, I am sure my thoughts expatiate nowhere oftener, or with more pleasure, than to Old Park. I hope you have made my peace with the angry little lady. It is certain, whether her name were in my letter or not, she was as present to my memory as the rest of the whole family; and I desire you would present her with two kisses in my name, and one a-piece to all the others; for I shall take the liberty to kiss them all, (great and small) as you are to be my proxy *.

In spite of the rain, which I think continued, with very short intervals, till the beginning of this month, and quite effaced the summer from the year, I made a shift to pass May and June not disagreeably in Kent. I was surprised at the beauty of the road to Canterbury, which (I know not why) had not struck me before. The whole country is a rich and well-cultivated garden; orchards, cherry-grounds, hop-gardens, intermixed with corn and frequent villages; gentle risings covered with wood, and every where the Thames and Medway breaking in upon the landscape with all their navigation. It was indeed owing to the bad weather that the whole scene was dressed in that tender emerald green, which one usually sees only for a fortnight

* Some readers will think this paragraph very trifling; yet many, I hope, will take it, as I give it, for a pleasing example of the amiableness of his domestic character.

in the opening of the spring; and this continued till I left the country. My residence was eight miles east of Canterbury, in a little quiet valley on the skirts of Barham-Down*. In these parts the whole soil is chalk, and whenever it holds up, in half an hour it is dry enough to walk out. I took the opportunity of three or four days fine weather to go into the Isle of Thanet; saw Margate, (which is Bartholomew fair by the sea-side) Ramsgate, and other places there; and so came by Sandwich, Deal, Dover, Folkstone, and Hithe, back again. The coast is not like Hartlepool; there are no rocks, but only chalky cliffs of no great height till you come to Dover; there indeed they are noble and picturesque, and the opposite coasts of France begin to bound your view, which was left before to range unlimited by any thing but the horizon; yet it is by no means a *shipless* sea, but every where peopled with white sails, and vessels of all sizes in motion: and take notice, (except in the Isle, which is all corn-fields, and has very little inclosure) there are in all places hedge-rows, and tall trees even within a few yards of the beach. Particularly, Hithe stands on an eminence covered with wood. I shall confess we had fires at night (ay, and at day too) several times in June; but do not go and take advantage in the north at this, for it was the most untoward year that ever I remember.

Have you read the New Bath Guide? It is the only thing in fashion, and is a new and original kind of humour. Miss Prue's conversion, I doubt, you will paste down, as a certain Yorkshire Baronet did before he carried it to his daughters: yet I remember you all read Crazy Tales without pasting. Buffon's first collection of Monkeys is

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* At Denton, where his friend the Rev. William Robinson, brother to Matthew Robinson, Esq. late member for Canterbury, then resided.

come out, (it makes the 14th volume) something, but not much to my edification; for he is pretty well acquainted with their persons, but not with their manners.

My compliments to Mrs. Wharton and all your family; I will not name them, lest I should affront any body.

LETTER LIV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. MASON.

March 28, 1767.

I BREAK in upon you at a moment, when we least of all are permitted to disturb our friends, only to say, that you are daily and hourly present to my thoughts. If the worst* be not yet past, you will neglect and pardon me: but if the last struggle be over; if the poor object of your long anxieties be no longer sensible to your kindness, or to her own sufferings, allow me (at least in idea, for what could I do, were I present, more than this?) to sit by you in silence, and pity from my heart not her, who is at rest, but you, who lose her. May He, who made us, the master of our pleasures and of our pains, preserve and support you! Adieu.

I have long understood how little you had to hope.

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* As this little billet (which I received at the Hot-Wells at Bristol) then breathed, and still seems to breathe, the very voice of friendship in its tenderest and most pathetic note, I cannot refrain from publishing it in this place. I opened it almost at the precise moment when it would necessarily be the most affecting.

LETTER LV.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BEATTIE.

Old Park, near Darlington, Durham,
August 12, 1767.

I RECEIVED from Mr. Williamson that very obliging mark you were pleased to give me of your remembrance: had I not entertained some slight hopes of revisiting Scotland this summer, and consequently of seeing you at Aberdeen, I had sooner acknowledged, by letter, the favour you have done me. Those hopes are now at an end; but I do not therefore despair of seeing again a country that has given me so much pleasure; nor of telling you, in person, how much I esteem you and (as you choose to call them) your amusements: the specimen of them, which you were so good as to send me, I think excellent; the sentiments are such as a melancholy imagination naturally suggests in solitude and silence, and that (though light and business may suspend or banish them at times) return with but so much the greater force upon a feeling heart: the diction is elegant and unconstrained; not loaded with epithets and figures, nor flagging into prose; the versification is easy and harmonious. My only objection is * * * * †

† A paragraph is here omitted, as it contained merely a few particular criticisms; a liberty of the same kind I have before taken in some of the preceding letters. The poem in question contained many touching reflections on mortality: it is to be hoped Dr. Beattie will one day give it to the public.

You see, sir, I take the liberty you indulged me in, when I first saw you; and therefore I make no excuses for it, but desire you would take your revenge on me in kind.

I have read over (but too hastily) Mr. Ferguson's book. There are uncommon strains of eloquence in it; and I was surprised to find not one single idiom of his country (I think) in the whole work. He has not the fault you mention*: his application to the heart is frequent, and often successful. His love of Montesquieu and Tacitus has led him into a manner of writing too short-winded and sententious; which those great men, had they lived in better times and under a better government, would have avoided.

I know no pretence that I have to the honour Lord Gray is pleased to do me†: but if his lordship chooses to own me, it certainly is not my business to deny it. I say not this merely on account of his quality, but because he is a very worthy and accomplished person. I am truly sorry for the

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* To explain this, I must take the liberty to transcribe a paragraph from Mr. Beattie's letter dated March 30, to which the above is an answer: 'A professor at Edinburgh has published an Essay on the History of Civil Society, but I have not seen it. It is a fault common to almost all our Scotch authors, that they are too metaphysical: I wish they would learn to speak more to the heart, and less to the understanding; but alas! this is a talent which heaven only can bestow: whereas the philosophic spirit (as we call it) is merely artificial and level to the capacity of every man, who has much patience, a little learning, and no taste.' He has since dilated on this just sentiment in his admirable Essay on the Immutability of Truth.

† Lord Gray had said that our author was related to his family.

great loss he has had since I left Scotland. If you should chance to see him, I will beg you to present my respectful humble service to his lordship.

I gave Mr. Williamson all the information I was able in the short time he staid with me. He seemed to answer well the character you gave me of him: but what I chiefly envied in him, was his ability of walking all the way from Aberdeen to Cambridge, and back again; which if I possessed, you would soon see your obliged, &c.

LETTER LVI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BEATTIE.

Pembroke-Hall, Dec. 24, 1767.

SINCE I had the pleasure of receiving your last letter, which did not reach me till I had left the North, and was come to London, I have been confined to my room with a fit of the gout: now I am recovered and in quiet at Cambridge, I take up my pen to thank you for your very friendly offers, which have so much the air of frankness and real good meaning, that were my body as tractable and easy of conveyance as my mind, you would see me to-morrow in the chamber you have so hospitably laid out for me at Aberdeen. But, alas! I am a summer-bird, and can only sit drooping till the sun returns: even then too my wings may chance to be clipped, and little in plight for so distant an excursion.

The proposal you make me, about printing at Glasgow what little I have ever written, does me honour. I leave my reputation in that part of the kingdom to your care; and only desire you would

not let your partiality to me and mine mislead you. If you persist in your design, Mr. Foulis certainly ought to be acquainted with what I am now going to tell you. When I was in London the last spring, Dodsley, the bookseller, asked my leave to reprint, in a smaller form, all I ever published; to which I consented: and added, that I would send him a few explanatory notes; and if he would omit entirely the *Long Story*, (which was never meant for the public, and only suffered to appear in that pompous edition because of Mr. Bentley's designs, which were not intelligible without it) I promised to send him something else to print instead of it, lest the bulk of so small a volume should be reduced to nothing at all. Now it is very certain that I had rather see them printed at Glasgow (especially as you will condescend to revise the press) than at London; but I know not how to retract my promise to Dodsley. By the way, you perhaps may imagine that I have some kind of interest in this publication; but the truth is, I have none whatever. The expense is his, and so is the profit, if there be any. I therefore told him the other day, in general terms, that I heard there would be an edition put out in Scotland by a friend of mine, whom I could not refuse; and that, if so, I would send thither a copy of the same notes and additions that I had promised to send to him. This did not seem at all to cool his courage; Mr. Foulis must therefore judge for himself, whether he thinks it worth while to print what is going to be printed also at London. If he does, I will send him (in a packet to you) the same things I shall send to Dodsley. They are imitations of two pieces of old Norwegian poetry, in which there was a wild spirit that struck me: but for my paraphrases I cannot say much; you will judge. The rest are nothing but a few parallel passages, and small notes just to explain what people said at the time was wrapped in total darkness. You will

please to tell me, as soon as you can conveniently, what Mr. Foulis says on this head; that (if he drops the design) I may save myself and you the trouble of this packet. I ask your pardon for talking so long about it; a little more, and my letter would be as big as all my works.

I have read, with much pleasure, an ode of yours (in which you have done me the honour to adopt a measure that I have used) on Lord Hay's birth-day. Though I do not love panegyric, I cannot but applaud this, for there is nothing mean in it. The diction is easy and noble, the texture of the thoughts lyric, and the versification harmonious. The few expressions I object to are * * * * †. These, indeed, are minutiæ; but they weigh for something, as half a grain makes a difference in the value of a diamond.

LETTER LVII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BEATTIE.

Pembroke-Hall, Feb. 1, 1768.

I AM almost sorry to have raised any degree of impatience in you, because I can by no means satisfy it. The sole reason I have to publish these few additions now, is to make up (in both) for the omission of that *Long Story;* and as to the notes, I do it out of spite, because the public did not understand the two odes (which I have called Pindaric); though the first was not very dark, and the second alluded

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† Another paragraph of particular criticism is here omitted.

to a few common facts to be found in any sixpenny history of England, by way of question and answer, for the use of children. The parallel passages I insert out of justice to those writers from whom I happened to take the hint of any line, as far as I can recollect.

I rejoice to be in the hands of Mr. Foulis, who has the laudable ambition of surpassing his predecessors, the *Etiennes* and the *Elzevirs*, as well in literature, as in the proper art of his profession: he surprises me in mentioning a lady, after whom I have been inquiring these fourteen years in vain. When the two odes were first published, I sent them to her; but as I was forced to direct them very much at random, probably they never came to her hands. When the present edition comes out, I beg of Mr. Foulis to offer her a copy, in my name, with my respects and grateful remembrances; he will send another to you, sir, and a third to Lord Gray, if he will do me the honour of accepting it. These are all the presents I pretend to make (for I would have it considered only as a new edition of an old book); after this if he pleases to send me one or two, I shall think myself obliged to him. I cannot advise him to print a great number; especially as Dodsley has it in his power to print as many as he pleases, though I desire him not to do so.

You are very good to me in taking this trouble upon you: all I can say is, that I shall be happy to return it in kind, whenever you will give me the opportunity.

LETTER LVIII*.

MR. GRAY TO THE DUKE OF GRAFTON.

MY LORD, Cambridge, July, 1768.

YOUR grace has dealt nobly with me; and the same delicacy of mind that induced you to confer this favour on me, unsolicited and unexpected, may perhaps make you averse to receive my sincerest thanks and grateful acknowledgments. Yet your grace must excuse me, they will have their way: they are indeed but words; yet I know and feel they come from my heart, and therefore are not wholly unworthy of your grace's acceptance. I even flatter myself (such is my pride) that you have some little satisfaction in your own work. If I did not deceive myself in this, it would complete the happiness of,

My lord,
Your grace's
Most obliged and devoted servant.

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* The two following letters explain the occasion of this address, in a way so honourable to his grace, and are withal so authentic a testimony of Mr. Gray's gratitude, that they leave me nothing to add on the subject.

LETTER LIX.

MR. GRAY TO MR. NICHOLLS*.

Jermyn-street, Aug. 3, 1768.

THAT Mr. Brockett has broken his neck, by a fall from his horse, you will have seen in the newspapers; and also that I, your humble servant, have kissed the king's hand for his succession: they are both true, but the manner how you know not; only I can assure you that I had no hand at all in his fall, and almost as little in the second event. He died on the Sunday; on Wednesday following his grace the Duke of Grafton wrote me a very polite letter to say, that his majesty had commanded him to offer me the vacant professorship, not only as a reward of, &c. but as a credit to, &c. with much more too high for me to transcribe: so on Thursday the king signed the warrant, and next day, at his levee, I kissed his hand; he made me several gracious speeches, which I shall not repeat, because every body, that goes to court, does so: besides, the day was so hot, and the ceremony so embarrassing to me, that I hardly knew what he said.

Adieu. I am to perish here with heat this fortnight yet, and then to Cambridge; to be sure my dignity is a little the worse for wear, but mended and washed, it will do for me.

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* Rector of Lounde and Bradwell, in Suffolk. His acquaintance with Mr. Gray commenced a few years before the date of this, when he was a student of Trinity-Hall, Cambridge.

LETTER LX.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BEATTIE.

Pembroke-Hall, Oct. 31, 1768.

IT is some time since I received from Mr. Foulis two copies of my poems, one by the hands of Mr. T. Pitt, the other by Mr. Merrill, a bookseller of this town: it is indeed a most beautiful edition, and must certainly do credit both to him and to me; but I fear it will be of no other advantage to him, as Dodsley has contrived to glut the town already with two editions beforehand, one of 1500, and the other of 750, both indeed far inferior to that of Glasgow, but sold at half the price. I must repeat my thanks, sir, for the trouble you have been pleased to give yourself on my account; and through you I must desire leave to convey my acknowledgments to Mr. Foulis, for the pains and expense he has been at in this publication.

We live at so great a distance, that, perhaps, you may not yet have learned, what, I flatter myself, you will not be displeased to hear: the middle of last summer his majesty was pleased to appoint me Regius Professor of Modern History in this University; it is the best thing the crown has to bestow (on a layman) here; the salary is 400l. per. ann. but what enhances the value of it to me is, that it was bestowed without being asked. The person, who held it before me, died on the Sunday; and on Wednesday following the Duke of Grafton wrote me a letter to say, that the king offered me this office, with many additional expressions of kindness on his grace's part, to whom I am but little known, and whom I have not seen either before or since he did me this favour. Instances of a benefit

so nobly conferred, I believe, are rare; and therefore I tell you of it as a thing that does honour, not only to me, but to the minister.

As I lived here before from choice, I shall now continue to do so from obligation: if business or curiosity should call you southwards, you will find few friends that will see you with more cordial satisfaction than, dear sir, &c.

END OF THE FOURTH SECTION.

SECTION V.

THE reader will have gathered, from the preceding series of letters, that the greatest part of Mr. Gray's life was spent in that kind of learned leisure, which has only self-improvement and self-gratification for its object: he will probably be surprised that, with so very strait an income, he should never have read with a view of making his researches lucrative to himself, or useful to the public. The truth was, Mr. Gray had ever expunged the word *lucrative* from his own vocabulary. He may be said to have been one of those very few personages in the annals of literature, especially in the poetical class, who are devoid of self-interest, and at the same time attentive to economy; and also, among mankind in general, one of those very few economists who possess that talent, untinctured with the slightest stain of avarice. Were it my purpose in this place to expatiate on his moral excellencies, I should here add, that when his circumstances were at the lowest, he gave away such sums in private charity as would have done credit to an ampler purse: but it is rather my less-pleasing province at present to acknowledge one of his foibles; and that was a certain degree of pride, which led him, of all other things, to despise the idea of being thought an author professed. I have been told indeed, that early in life he had an intention of publishing an edition of Strabo; and I find amongst his papers a great number of geographical disquisitions, particularly with respect to that part of Asia which comprehends Persia and India; con-

cerning the ancient and modern names and divisions of which extensive countries, his notes are very copious. The indefatigable pains which he also took with the writings of Plato, and the quantity of critical, as well as explanatory observations, which he has left upon almost every part of his works, plainly indicate, that no man in Europe was better prepared to republish and illustrate that philosopher than Mr. Gray. Another work, on which he bestowed uncommon labour, was the 'Anthologia.' Amongst the books, which his friendship bequeathed to me, is Henry Stevens's edition of that collection of Greek Epigrams, interleaved; in which he has transcribed several additional ones that he selected in his extensive reading, has inserted a great number of critical notes and emendations, and subjoined a copious index, in which every epigram is arranged under the name of its respective author*. This manu-

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* It should seem that Mr. Gray's pains were, on this occasion, very ill employed; for the late Lord Chesterfield, writing to his son, says, 'I hope you are got out of the worst company in the world, the Greek Epigrams. Martial has wit, and is worth looking into sometimes; but I recommend the Greek Epigrams to your supreme contempt.' See Lord Chesterfield's Letters, Let. 73. However, if what Mr. Gray says be true, p. 348, supra, that 'a dead lord ranks only with commoners,' there may come a time when Lord Chesterfield's dictum, in matters of taste, may not be held more infallible than that of his own and other dead lords, in points of religion and morality: nay, when his own plan of *gentlemanly* education may be thought less capable of furnishing his country with useful members of society than the plain old-fashioned one which he wrote to explode. If this day does not quickly come, one may, without pretending to a

script, though written in that exact manner, as if intended for the press, I do not know that it was ever Mr. Gray's design to make public. The only work, which he meditated upon with this direct view from the beginning, was a History of English Poetry. He has mentioned this himself in an advertisement prefixed to those three fine imitations of Norse and Welch poetry, which he gave the world in the last edition of his Poems. But the slight manner, in which he there speaks of that design, may admit here of some additional explanation. Several years ago I was indebted to the friendship of the present learned Bishop of Gloucester for *a curious manuscript paper of Mr. Pope, which contains the first sketch of a plan for a work of this kind, and which I have still in my possession. Mr. Gray was greatly struck with the method which Mr. Pope had traced out in this little sketch; and on my proposal of engaging with him in compiling such a history, he examined the plan more accurately, enlarged it considerably, and formed an idea for an introduction to it. In this was to be assertained the origin of rhyme; and specimens not only of the Provençal poetry, (to which alone Mr. Pope seemed to have adverted) but of the Scaldic, British, and Saxon, were to have been given; as, from all these different sources united, English poetry had its original: though it could hardly be called by that name till the time of Chaucer, with whose school (i. e. the poets who wrote in his manner) the history itself was intended to commence. The materials which I collected for this purpose are too inconsiderable to be

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gift of prophecy, pronounce that England will neither be, nor deserve to be, any thing better than a province of France.

* A transcript of this paper is to be found printed in the Life of Mr. Pope, written by Mr. Ruffhead.

mentioned: but Mr. Gray, besides versifying those odes that he published, made many elaborate disquisitions into the origin of rhyme, and that variety of metre, to be found in the writings of our ancient poets. He also transcribed many parts of the voluminous Lidgate, from manuscripts which he found in the University Library and those of private colleges; remarking, as he went along, the several beauties and defects of this immediate scholar of Chaucer. He however soon found that a work of this kind, pursued on so very extensive a plan, would become almost endless: and hearing at the same time that Mr. Thomas Warton, Fellow of Trinity-College, Oxford, (of whose abilities, from his observations on Spenser, we had each of us conceived the highest opinion) was engaged in a work of the same kind, we by mutual consent relinquished our undertaking; and soon after, on that gentleman's desiring a sight of the plan, Mr. Gray readily sent him a copy of it*.

At a time when I am enumerating the more considerable of Mr. Gray's antiquarian pursuits, I must not omit to mention his great knowledge of Gothic architecture. He had seen, and accurately studied in his youth, while abroad, the Roman proportions on the spot, both in ancient ruins and in the works of Palladio. In his later years he applied himself to consider those stupendous structures of more modern date, that adorn our own country; which, if they have not the same grace, have undoubtedly equal dignity. He endeavoured to trace this mode of building, from the time it

* This gentleman has just now politely acknowledged the favour in his preface to his first volume on this subject. A work, which, as he proceeds in it through more enlightened periods, will undoubtedly give the world as high an idea of his critical taste, as the present specimen does of his indefatigable researches into antiquity.

commenced, through its various changes, till it arrived at its perfection in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and ended in that of Elizabeth. For this purpose he did not so much depend upon written accounts, as that internal evidence which the buildings themselves give of their respective antiquity; since they constantly furnish to the well-informed eye, arms, ornaments, and other indubitable marks, by which their several ages may be ascertained. On this account he applied himself to the study of heraldry as a preparatory science, and has left behind him a number of genealogical papers, more than sufficient to prove him a complete master of it. By these means he arrived at so very extraordinary a pitch of sagacity, as to be enabled to pronounce, at first sight, on the precise time when every particular part of any of our cathedrals was erected. He invented also several terms of art, the better to explain his meaning on this subject. I frequently pressed him to digest these in a regular order; and offered, under his direction, to adapt a set of drawings to them, which might describe every ornament peculiarly in use in every different æra. But though he did not disapprove this hint, he neglected it; and has left no papers that would lead to its prosecution. I therefore mention it in this place, only to induce certain of his friends, to whom I know he communicated more of his thoughts upon this subject than to me, to pursue the design, if they think it would be attended with utility to the public.

There is an Eloge on M. l'Abbé Le Beuf, published in the 'Histoire de l'Acad. des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, vol. 29th,' by which it appears that gentleman had precisely the same idea with Mr. Gray on this subject; and, by pursuing it, had arrived at the same degree of skill. 'Les Voyages et les Lectures de M. l'Abbé Le Beuf l'avoient tellement familiarisé avec les monumens, qu'il apercevoit les differences les plus delicates de l'ancienne

architecture: il demêloit du premier coup-d'œil, les caracteres de chaque siecle; à l'inspection d'un bâtiment il pouvoit dire, quelquefois à vingt années près, dans quel temps il avoit été construit: les ceintres, les chapiteaux, les moulures portoient à ses yeux la date de leur bâtisse: beaucoup de grands edifices ont été l'ouvrage de plusieurs siecles; plus encore ont été reparés en des siecles differens; il décomposoit un même bâtiment avec une facilité singulière, il fixoit l'age des diverses parties, et ses decisions etoient toujours fondées sur des preuves indubitables; on en trouve une foule d'exemples dans son Histoire du Diocese de Paris.' His panegyrist also informs us, that he was solicited by his friend, M. Joly de Fleury, to reduce into a body of science the discoveries which he had made; that his ill health prevented him; but that the work is now in the hands of a person very capable of perfecting his idea. Yet I question whether a work of this kind, from a French writer, will be of any great importance, since I am informed by a very competent judge, that the resemblance between Gothic architecture in England and in France is surprisingly slight, except in the cathedral at Amiens, and a few other churches, supposed to be built by the English while in possession of French provinces. The public has much more to hope from Mr. T. Warton's late promise to it, as he, of all other living writers, is best qualified to give complete satisfaction to the curious on this subject: in the meanwhile, it may not be amiss to inform the reader, that Mr. Bentham's Remarks on Saxon Churches, which make a part of an elaborate introduction to his History of Ely Cathedral, lately published, will convey to him many sentiments of Mr. Gray; as, amongst other antiquaries, he contributed his assistance to that gentleman; who, in his preface, has accordingly mentioned the obligation.

But the favourite study of Mr. Gray, for the last

ten years of his life, was natural history, which he then rather resumed than began; as, by the instructions of his uncle Antrobus, he was a considerable botanist at fifteen. He followed it closely, and often said that he thought it a singular felicity to have engaged in it; as, besides the constant amusement it gave him in his chamber, it led him more frequently out into the fields; and, by making his life less sedentary, improved the general course of his health and spirits.

Habituated, as he had long been, to apply only to first-rate authors, as to the fountain-head of that knowledge, which he was at the time solicitous to acquire, it is obvious that, when he resolved to make himself master of natural history, he would immediately become the disciple of the great Linnæus. His first business was to understand accurately his 'termini artis,' which he called justly the learning a new original language. He then went regularly through the vegetable, animal, and fossile kingdoms. The marginal notes which he has left, not only on Linnæus, but the many other authors which he read on these subjects, are very numerous: but the most considerable are on Hudson's Flora Anglica, and the tenth edition of the Systema Naturæ; which latter he interleaved, and filled almost entirely. While employed on Zoology, he also read Aristole's treatise on that subject with great care, and explained many difficult passages of that obscure ancient, from the lights he had acquired from modern naturalists.

Having now given a general account of that variety of literary pursuits, which, in their turns, principally engaged his attention, and which were either not mentioned, or only glanced at in the preceding letters, let me be permitted to say a word or two of his amusements. The chief, and almost the only one of these, (if we except the frequent experiments he made on flowers, in order to mark the mode and progress of their vegetation) was

music. His taste in this art was equal to his skill in any more important science. It was founded on the best models, those great masters in Italy, who flourished about the same time with his favourite Pergolesi. Of his and of Leo's, Bononcini's, Vinci's, and Hasse's works, he made a valuable collection while abroad, chiefly of such of their vocal compositions as he had himself heard and admired; observing in his choice of these, the same judicious rule which he followed in making his collection of prints; which was not so much to get together complete sets of the works of any master, as to select those (the best in their kind) which would recall to his memory the capital pictures, statues, and buildings which he had seen and studied. By this means, as he acquired in painting great facility and accuracy in the knowledge of hands, so in music he gained supreme skill in the more refined powers of expression; especially when we consider that art as an adjunct to poetry: for vocal music, and that only, (excepting perhaps the lessons of the younger Scarlatti) was what he chiefly regarded. His instrument was the harpsichord; on which, though he had little execution, yet, when he sung to it, he so modulated the small powers of his voice *, as to be able to convey to the intelligent hearer no common degree of satisfaction. This, however, he could seldom be prevailed upon to do, even by his most intimate acquaintance.

To conclude this slight sketch of his literary character, I believe I may with great truth assert, that excepting pure mathematics, and the studies de-

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* He was much admired for his singing in his youth; yet he was so shy in exercising this talent, that Mr. Walpole tells me he never could but once prevail on him to give a proof of it; and then it was with so much pain to himself, that it gave him no manner of pleasure.

pendent on that science, there was hardly any part of human learning in which he had not acquired a competent skill; in most of them a consummate mastery.

I proceed now, as I did in the former sections, to select, for the reader's perusal, the last series of his letters. They are few in number; yet contain all the incidents that occurred in that very short space of time, during which Providence was pleased further to continue him a blessing to his friends, and an ornament to his country.

LETTER I.

MR. GRAY TO MR. NICHOLLS.

I WAS absent from college, and did not receive your melancholy letter till my return hither yesterday; so you must not attribute this delay to me, but to accident: to sympathize with you in such a loss * is an easy task for me, but to comfort you not so easy: can I wish to see you unaffected with the sad scene now before your eyes, or with the loss of a person that, through a great part of your life, has proved himself so kind a friend to you? He who best knows our nature (for he made us what we are) by such afflictions recalls us from our wandering thoughts and idle merriment; from the insolence of youth and prosperity, to serious reflection, to our duty, and to himself; nor need we hasten to get rid of these impressions; time (by appointment of the same power) will cure the smart, and in some hearts soon blot out all the traces of

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* The death of his uncle, Governor Floyer.

sorrow: but such as preserve them longest (for it is partly left in our own power) do perhaps best acquiesce in the will of the chastiser.

For the consequence of this sudden loss, I see them well, and I think, in a like situation, could fortify my mind, so as to support them with cheerfulness and good hopes, though not naturally inclined to see things in their best aspect. When you have time to turn yourself round, you must think seriously of your profession; you know I would have wished to see you wear the livery of it long ago: but I will not dwell on this subject at present To be obliged to those we love and esteem is a pleasure, but to serve and oblige them is a still greater; and this, with independence, (no vulgar blessing) are what a profession at your age may reasonably promise: without it they are hardly attainable. Remember I speak from experience.

In the mean time while your present situation lasts, which I hope will not be long, continue your kindness and confidence in me, by trusting me with the whole of it; and surely you hazard nothing by so doing: that situation does not appear so new to me as it does to you. You well know the tenor of my conversation (urged at times perhaps a little farther than you liked) has been intended to prepare you for this event, and to familiarize your mind with this spectre, which you call by its worst name: but remember that 'Honesta res est læta paupertas.' I see it with respect, and so will every one, whose poverty is not seated in their mind*. There is but one real evil in it (take my word who know it well) and that is, that you have less the power of assisting others, who have not the same resources to support them. You have youth: you have many kind well-intentioned people belonging to you; many acquaintance of your own, or families that will wish to serve you. Consider how

* An excellent thought finely expressed.

many have had the same, or greater cause for dejection, with none of these resources before their eyes. Adieu. I sincerely wish you happiness.

P. S. I have just heard that a friend of mine is struck with a paralytic disorder, in which state it is likely he may live incapable of assisting himself, in the hands of servants or relations that only gape after his spoils, perhaps for years to come: think how many things may befall a man far worse than poverty or death *.

LETTER II.

MR. GRAY TO MR. NICHOLLS.

Pembroke College, June 24, 1769.

AND so you have a garden of your own †, and you plant and transplant, and are dirty and amused!

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* This letter was written a year or two before the time when this series of letters should commence; but as it was not communicated to me before the last section was printed off, and has a connexion with that which follows it, I chose to begin this section with it; the date not appearing to be very material, and the pathetic and friendly turn of it strongly pleading for its insertion.

† Mr. Nicholls, by having pursued the advice of his correspondent, we find was now possessed of that competency which he wished him. Happy, not only in having so sage an adviser, but in his own good sense which prompted him to follow such advice. The gaiety, whim, and humour of this letter contrast prettily with the gravity and serious reflection of the former.

Are not you ashamed of yourself? Why, I have no such thing, you monster, nor ever shall be either dirty or amused as long as I live. My gardens are in the windows like those of a lodger up three pair of stairs in Petticoat-lane, or Camomile-street, and they go to bed regularly under the same roof that I do. Dear, how charming it must be to walk out in one's own *garding*, and sit on a bench in the open air, with a fountain and leaden statue, and a rolling stone, and an arbour: have a care of sore throats though, and the *agoe*.

However, be it known to you, though I have no garden, I have sold my estate and got a thousand guineas *, and fourscore pounds a year for my old aunt, and a twenty pound prize in the lottery, and Lord knows what arrears in the treasury, and am a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him, and in a few days shall have new window curtains: are you advised of that? ay, and a new mattress to lie upon.

My Ode has been rehearsed again and again †, and the scholars have got scraps by heart: I expect to see it torn piece-meal in the North-Briton before it is born. If you will come, you shall see it, and sing in it amidst a chorus from Salisbury and Gloucester music meeting, great names there, and all well versed in Judas Maccabæus. I wish it were once over; for then I immediately go for a few days to London, and so with Mr. Brown to Aston,

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* Consisting of houses on the west side of Hand-alley, London: Mrs. Olliffe was the aunt here mentioned, who had a share in this estate, and for whom he procured this annuity. She died in 1771, a few months before her nephew.

† Ode for Music on the Duke of Grafton's Installation. See Poems, p. 25. His reason for writing it is given in the next letter.

though I fear it will rain the whole summer, and Skiddaw will be invisible and inaccessible to mortals.

I have got De la Landes' Voyage through Italy, in eight volumes; he is a member of the academy of sciences, and pretty good to read. I have read too an octavo volume of Shenstone's Letters: poor man! he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions; and his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and in a place which his taste had adorned; but which he only enjoyed when people of note came to see and commend it: his correspondence is about nothing else but this place and his own writings, with two or three neighbouring clergymen who wrote verses too.

I have just found the beginning of a letter, which somebody had dropped: I should rather call it first-thoughts for the beginning of a letter; for there are many scratches and corrections. As I cannot use it myself, (having got a beginning already of my own) I send it for your use on some great occasion.

Dear Sir,

'After so long silence, the hopes of pardon and prospect of forgiveness might seem entirely extinct, or at least very remote, was I not truly sensible of your goodness and candour, which is the only asylum that my negligence can fly to, since every apology would prove insufficient to counterbalance it, or alleviate my fault: how then shall my deficiency presume to make so bold an attempt, or be able to suffer the hardships of so rough a campaign?' &c. &c. &c.

LETTER III.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BEATTIE.

Cambridge, July 16, 1769.

THE late ceremony of the Duke of Grafton's installation has hindered me from acknowledging sooner the satisfaction your friendly compliment gave me: I thought myself bound in gratitude to his grace, unasked, to take upon me the task of writing those verses which are usually set to music on this occasion *. I do not think them worth sending you, because they are by nature doomed to live but a single day; or, if their existence is prolonged beyond that date, it is only by means of newspaper parodies, and witless criticisms. This sort of abuse I had reason to expect, but did not think it worth while to avoid.

Mr. Foulis is magnificent in his gratitude †: I

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* In a short note which he wrote to Mr. Stonhewer, June 12, when, at his request, he sent him the Ode in manuscript for his grace's perusal, he expresses this motive more fully. 'I did not intend the duke should have heard me till he could not help it. You are desired to make the best excuses you can to his grace for the liberty I have taken of praising him to his face; but as somebody was necessarily to do this, I did not see why Gratitude should sit silent and leave it to Expectation to sing, who certainly would have sung, and that *à gorge deployée* upon such an occasion.'

† When the Glasgow edition of Mr. Gray's Poems was sold off (which it was in a short time) Mr. Foulis finding himself a considerable gainer,

cannot figure to myself how it can be worth his while to offer me such a present. You can judge better of it than I; and if he does not hurt himself by it, I would accept his Homer with many thanks. I have not got or even seen it.

I could wish to subscribe to his new edition of Milton, and desire to be set down for two copies of the large paper; but you must inform me where and when I may pay the money.

You have taught me to long for a second letter, and particularly for what you say will make the contents of it *. I have nothing to requite it with but plain and friendly truth, and that you shall have, joined to a zeal for your fame, and a pleasure in your success.

I am now setting forward on a journey towards the North of England; but it will not reach so far as I could wish. I must return hither before Michaelmas, and shall barely have time to visit a few places, and a few friends.

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mentioned to Mr. Beattie, that he wished to make Mr. Gray a present either of his Homer in 4 vols. folio, or the Greek Historians, printed likewise at his press, in 29 vols. duodecimo.

* His correspondent had intimated to him his intention of sending him his first book of the Minstrel. See the seventh letter of this series.

LETTER IV.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

Aston, Oct. 18, 1769.

I HOPE you got safe and well home after that troublesome night*. I long to hear you say so. For me, I have continued well, been so favoured by the weather, that my walks have never once been

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* Dr. Wharton, who had intended to accompany Mr. Gray to Keswick, was seized at Brough with a violent fit of his asthma, which obliged him to return home. This was the reason that Mr. Gray undertook to write the following journal of his tour for his friend's amusement. He sent it under different covers. I give it here in continuation. It may not be amiss, however, to hint to the reader, that if he expects to find elaborate and nicely-turned periods in this narration, he will be greatly disappointed. When Mr. Gray described places, he aimed only to be exact, clear, and intelligible; to convey peculiar, not general ideas, and to paint by the eye, not the fancy. There have been many accounts of the Westmoreland and Cumberland lakes, both before and since this was written, and all of them better calculated to please readers, who are fond of what they call *fine writing*: yet those who can content themselves with an elegant simplicity of narrative will, I flatter myself, find this to their taste; they will perceive it was written with a view rather to inform than surprise; and, if they make it their companion when they take the same tour, it will enhance their opinion of its intrinsic excellence; in this way I tried it myself before I resolved to print it.

hindered till yesterday (that is a fortnight and three or four days, and a journey of more than 300 miles). I am now at Aston for two days. To-morrow I go to Cambridge. Mason is not here, but Mr. Alderson receives me. According to my promise I send you the first sheet of my journal, to be continued without end.

Sept. 30. A mile and a half from Brough, where we parted, on a hill lay a great army* encamped: to the left opened a fine valley with green meadows and hedge-rows, a gentleman's house peeping forth from a grove of old trees. On a nearer approach appeared myriads of cattle and horses in the road itself, and in all the fields round me a brisk stream hurrying cross the way, thousands of clean healthy people in their best party-coloured apparel: farmers and their families, esquires and their daughters hastening up from the dales and down the fells from every quarter, glittering in the sun, and pressing forward to join the throng. While the dark hills, on whose tops the mists were yet hanging, served as a contrast to this gay and moving scene, which continued for near two miles more along the road, and the crowd (coming towards it) reached on as far as Appleby. On the ascent of the hill above Appleby the thick hanging wood, and the long reaches of the Eden, clear, rapid, and full as ever, winding below, with views of the castle and town, gave much employment to the mirror†: but now the sun was wanting, and

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* There is a great fair for cattle kept on the hill near Brough on this day and the preceding.

† Mr. Gray carried usually with him on these tours a plano-convex mirror of about four inches diameter on a black foil, and bound up like a pocket-book. A glass of this sort is perhaps the best and most convenient substitute for a camera obscura of any thing that has hitherto been invented, and may be had of any optician.

the sky overcast. Oats and barley cut every where, but not carried in. Passed Kirbythore, Sir William Dalston's house at Acorn-Bank, Whinfield Park, Harthorn Oaks, Countess-Pillar, Brougham-Castle, Mr. Brown's large new house; crossed the Eden and the Eimot (pronounce Eeman) with its green vale, and dined at three o'clock with Mrs. Buchanan at Penrith, on trout and partridge. In the afternoon walked up Beacon-hill, a mile to the top, and could see Ulswater through an opening in the bosom of that cluster of broken mountains, which the doctor well remembers, Whinfield and Lowther Parks, &c. and the craggy tops of a hundred nameless hills: these lie to west and south. To the north a great extent of black and dreary plains. To the east, Cross-fell, just visible through mists and vapours hovering round it.

Oct. 1. A gray autumnal day, the air perfectly calm and mild, went to see Ulswater, five miles distant; soon left the Keswick-road, and turned to the left through shady lanes along the vale of Eeman, which runs rapidly on near the way, rippling over the stones; to the right is Delmaine, a large fabric of pale red stone, with nine windows in front and seven on the side, built by Mr. Hassle, behind it a fine lawn surrounded by woods, and a long rocky eminence rising over them: a clear and brisk rivulet runs by the house to join the Eeman, whose course is in sight and at a small distance. Farther on appears Hatton St. John, a castle-like old mansion of Mr. Huddleston. Approached Dunmallert, a fine pointed hill covered with wood, planted by old Mr. Hassle before-mentioned, who lives always at home, and delights in planting. Walked over a spungy meadow or two, and began to mount the hill through a broad straight green alley among the trees, and with some toil gained the summit. From hence saw the lake opening directly at my feet, majestic in its calmness, clear and smooth as a blue mirror, with winding shores

and low points of land covered with green inclosures, white farm-houses looking out among the trees, and cattle feeding. The water is almost every where bordered with cultivated lands, gently sloping upwards from a mile to a quarter of a mile in breadth, till they reach the feet of the mountains, which rise very rude and awful with their broken tops on either hand. Directly in front, at better than three miles distance, Place-Fell, one of the bravest among them, pushes its bold broad breast into the midst of the lake, and forces it to alter its course, forming first a large bay to the left, and then bending to the right. I descended Dunmallert again by a side avenue, that was only not perpendicular, and came to Barton-bridge over the Eeman; then walking through a path in a wood round the bottom of the hill, came forth where the Eeman issues out of the lake, and continued my way along its western shore close to the water, and generally on a level with it. Saw a cormorant flying over it and fishing. The figure of the lake nothing resembles that laid down in our maps: it is nine miles long, and at widest under a mile in breadth. After extending itself three miles and a half in a line to the south-west, it turns at the foot of Place-Fell almost due west, and is here not twice the breadth of the Thames at London. It is soon again interrupted by the root of Helvellyn, a lofty and very rugged mountain, and spreading again turns off to south-east, and is lost among the deep recesses of the hills. To this second turning I pursued my way about four miles along its borders beyond a village scattered among trees, and called Water-Mallock, in a pleasant grave day, perfectly calm and warm, but without a gleam of sunshine; then the sky seeming to thicken, and the valley to grow more desolate, and evening drawing on, I returned by the way I came to Penrith.

Oct. 2. I set out at ten for Keswick, by the road

we went in 1767; saw Greystock town and castle to the right, which lie about three miles from Ulswater over the fells; passed through Penradoch and Threlcot at the foot of Saddleback, whose furrowed sides were gilt by the noon-day sun, whilst its brow appeared of a sad purple from the shadow of the clouds as they sailed slowly by it. The broad and green valley of Gardies and Lowside, with a swift stream glittering among the cottages and meadows, lay to the left, and the much finer but narrower valley of St. John's opening into it: Hill-top, the large though low mansion of the Gaskarths, now a farm-house, seated on an eminence among woods, under a steep fell, was what appeared the most conspicuous, and beside it a great rock, like some ancient tower nodding to its fall. Passed by the side of Skiddaw and its cub called Latter-rig; and saw from an eminence, at two miles distance, the vale of Elysium in all its verdure; the sun then playing on the bosom of the lake, and lighting up all the mountains with its lustre. Dined by two o'clock at the Queen's Head, and then straggled out alone to the Parsonage, where I saw the sun set in all its glory.

Oct. 3. A heavenly day; rose at seven, and walked out under the conduct of my landlord to Borrowdale; the grass was covered with a hoar-frost, which soon melted and exhaled in a thin bluish smoke; crossed the meadows, obliquely catching a diversity of views among the hills over the lake and islands, and changing prospect at every ten paces. Left Cockshut (which we formerly mounted) and Castle-hill, a loftier and more rugged hill behind me, and drew near the foot of Wallacrag, whose bare and rocky brow cut perpendicularly down above 400 feet (as I guess, though the people call it much more) awfully overlooks the way. Our path here tends to the left, and the ground gently rising and covered with a glade of scattering trees and bushes on the very margin of

the water, opens both ways the most delicious view that my eyes ever beheld; opposite are the thick woods of Lord Egremont and Newland-valley, with green and smiling fields embosomed in the dark cliffs; to the left the jaws of Borrowdale, with that turbulent chaos of mountain behind mountain, rolled in confusion; beneath you and stretching far away to the right, the shining purity of the lake reflecting rocks, woods, fields, and inverted tops of hills, just ruffled by the breeze, enough to show it is alive, with the white buildings of Keswick, Crosthwaite church, and Skiddaw for a back ground at a distance. Behind you the magnificent heights of Walla-crag: here the glass played its part divinely, the place is called Carf-close-reeds; and I chose to set down these barbarous names, that any body may inquire on the place, and easily find the particular station that I mean. This scene continues to Barrow-gate; and a little farther, passing a brook called Barrow-beck, we entered Borrowdale: the crags named Lawdoor-banks begin now to impend terribly over your way, and more terribly when you hear that three years since an immense mass of rock tumbled at once from the brow, and barred all access to the dale (for this is the only road) till they could work their way through it. Luckily no one was passing at the time of this fall; but down the side of the mountain, and far into the lake, lie dispersed the huge fragments of this ruin in all shapes and in all directions: something farther we turned aside into a coppice, ascending a little in front of Lawdoor water-fall; the height appeared to be about 200 feet, the quantity of water not great, though (these three days excepted) it had rained daily in the hills for near two months before: but then the stream was nobly broken, leaping from rock to rock, and foaming with fury. On one side a towering crag that spired up to equal, if not overtop, the neighbouring cliffs (this lay all in shade and darkness):

on the other hand a rounder broader projecting hill shagged with wood, and illuminated by the sun, which glanced sideways on the upper part of the cataract. The force of the water wearing a deep channel in the ground, hurries away to join the lake. We descended again, and passed the stream over a rude bridge. Soon after we came under Gowdar-crag, a hill more formidable to the eye, and to the apprehension, than that of Lawdoor; the rocks at top deep-cloven perpendicularly, by the rains, hanging loose and nodding forwards, seem just starting from their base in shivers. The whole way down, and the road on both sides is strewed with piles of the fragments strangely thrown across each other, and of a dreadful bulk; the place reminds me of those passes in the Alps, where the guides tell you to move on with speed, and say nothing, lest the agitation of the air should loosen the snows above, and bring down a mass that would overwhelm a caravan. I took their counsel here, and hastened on in silence.

Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda, e passa!

The hills here are clothed all up their steep sides with oak, ash, birch, holly, &c.; some of it has been cut forty years ago, some within these eight years; yet all is sprung again, green, flourishing, and tall, for its age, in a place where no soil appears but the staring rock, and where a man could scarce stand upright: here we met a civil young farmer overseeing his reapers (for it is now oat-harvest) who conducted us to a neat white house in the village of Grange, which is built on a rising ground in the midst of a valley; round it the mountains form an awful amphitheatre, and through it obliquely runs the Derwent clear as glass, and showing under its bridge every trout that passes. Beside the village rises a round eminence of rock covered entirely with old trees, and over that more proudly towers Castle-crag, in-

vested also with wood on its sides, and bearing on its naked top some traces of a fort, said to be Roman. By the side of this hill, which almost blocks up the way, the valley turns to the left, and contracts its dimensions till there is hardly any road but the rocky bed of the river. The wood of the mountains increases, and their summits grow loftier to the eye, and of more fantastic forms; among them appear Eagle's-cliff, Dove's-nest, Whitedale-pike, &c. celebrated names in the annals of Keswick. The dale opens about four miles higher till you come to Seawhaite (where lies the way mounting the hills to the right that leads to the Wadd-mines); all farther access is here barred to prying mortals, only there is a little path winding over the fells, and for some weeks in the year passable to the dalesmen; but the mountains know well that these innocent people will not reveal the mysteries of their ancient kingdom, 'the reign of Chaos and Old Night:' only I learned that this dreadful road, dividing again, leads one branch to Ravenglas, and the other to Hawkshead.

For me I went no farther than the farmer's (better than four miles from Keswick) at Grange; his mother and he brought us butter that Siserah would have jumped at, though not in a lordly dish, bowls of milk, thin oaten cakes, and ale; and we had carried a cold tongue thither with us. Our farmer was himself the man that last year plundered the eagle's eyrie; all the dale are up in arms on such an occasion, for they lose abundance of lambs yearly, not to mention hares, partridges, grouse, &c. He was let down from the cliff in ropes to the shelf of the rock on which the nest was built, the people above shouting and hollowing to fright the old birds, which flew screaming round, but did not dare to attack him. He brought off the eaglet (for there is rarely more than one) and an addle egg. The nest was roundish, and more than a yard over, made of twigs twisted

together. Seldom a year passes but they take the brood or eggs, and sometimes they shoot one, sometimes the other, parent; but the survivor has always found a mate (probably in Ireland), and they breed near the old place. By his description I learn, that this species is the *Erne*, the vulture *Albicilla* of Linnæus, in his last edition (but in yours *Falco Albicilla*), so consult him and Pennant about it.

We returned leisurely home the way we came; but saw a new landscape; the features indeed were the same in part, but many new ones were disclosed by the mid-day sun, and the tints were entirely changed: take notice this was the best, or perhaps the only day for going up Skiddaw, but I thought it better employed; it was perfectly serene, and hot as midsummer.

In the evening I walked alone down to the lake by the side of Crow-park after sunset, and saw the solemn colouring of night draw on, the last gleam of sunshine fading away on the hill-tops, the deep serene of the waters, and the long shadows of the mountains thrown across them, till they nearly touched the hithermost shore. At a distance were heard the murmurs of many water-falls, not audible in the day-time; I wished for the moon, but she was *dark to me and silent,*

Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

Oct. 4. I walked to Crow-park, now a rough pasture, once a glade of ancient oaks, whose large roots still remain on the ground, but nothing has sprung from them. If one single tree had remained, this would have been an unparalleled spot; and Smith judged right, when he took his print of the lake from hence, for it is a gentle eminence, not too high, on the very margin of the water, and commanding it from end to end, looking full into the gorge of Borrowdale. I prefer it even to Cockshut-hill, which lies beside it, and to which

I walked in the afternoon; it is covered with young trees both sown and planted, oak, spruce, Scotch fir, &c. all which thrive wonderfully. There is an easy ascent to the top, and the view far preferable to that on Castle-hill (which you remember), because this is lower and nearer to the lake: for I find all points, that are much elevated, spoil the beauty of the valley, and make its parts, which are not large, look poor and diminutive *. While I was here a little shower fell, red clouds came marching up the hills from the east, and part of a bright rainbow seemed to rise along the side of Castle-hill.

From hence I got to the Parsonage a little before sunset, and saw in my glass a picture, that if I could transmit to you, and fix it in all the softness of its living colours, would fairly sell for a thousand pounds. This is the sweetest scene I can yet discover in point of pastoral beauty; the rest are in a sublimer style.

Oct. 5. I walked through the meadows and cornfields to the Derwent, and crossing it went up

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* The *picturesque point* is always thus low in all prospects; a truth, which though the landscape painter knows, he cannot always observe; since the patron who employs him to take a view of his place usually carries him to some elevation for that purpose, in order, I suppose, that he may have more of him for his money. Yet when I say this, I would not be thought to mean that a drawing should be made from the lowest point possible; as for instance, in this very view, from the lake itself, for then a fore-ground would be wanting. On this account, when I sailed on Derwentwater, I did not receive so much pleasure from the superb amphitheatre of mountains around me as when, like Mr. Gray, I traversed its margin; and I therefore think he did not lose much by not taking boat.

How-hill; it looks along Bassingthwaite-water, and sees at the same time the course of the river, and a part of the upper-lake, with a full view of Skiddaw; then I took my way through Portingskall village to the Park, a hill so called, covered entirely with wood; it is all a mass of crumbling slate. Passed round its foot between the trees and the edge of the water, and came to a peninsula that juts out into the lake, and looks along it both ways; in front rises Walla-crag and Castle-hill, the town, the road to Penrith, Skiddaw, and Saddleback. Returning, met a brisk and cold north-eastern blast that ruffled all the surface of the lake, and made it rise in little waves that broke at the foot of the wood. After dinner walked up the Penrith road two miles, or more, and turning into a corn-field to the right, called Castle-rig, saw a Druid-circle of large stones, 108 feet in diameter, the biggest not eight feet high, but most of them still erect; they are fifty in number*. The valley of St. John's appeared in sight, and the summits of Catchidecam (called by Camden, Casticand) and Helvellyn, said to be as high as Skiddaw, and to rise from a much higher base.

Oct. 6. Went in a chaise eight miles along the east side of Bassingthwaite-water to Ousebridge (pronounced Ews-bridge); the road in some part made and very good, the rest slippery and dangerous cart-road, or narrow rugged lanes, but no precipices; it runs directly along the foot of Skiddaw: opposite to Widhopebrows, clothed to the top with wood, a very beautiful view opens down to the lake, which is narrower and longer than that of Keswick, less broken into bays, and without islands†. At the foot of it, a few paces from the

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* See this piece of antiquity more fully described, with a plate annexed, by Mr. Pennant, in his Second Tour to Scotland in 1772, p. 38.

† It is somewhat extraordinary that Mr. Gray

brink, gently sloping upwards, stands Armathwaite in a thick grove of Scotch firs, commanding a noble view directly up the lake: at a small distance behind the house is a large extent of wood, and still behind this a ridge of cultivated hills, on which, according to the Keswick proverb, *the sun always shines*. The inhabitants here, on the contrary, call the vale of Derwent-water *the Devil's Chamber-pot*, and pronounce the name of *Skiddaw-fell*, which terminates here, with a sort of terror and aversion. Armathwaite house is a modern fabric, not large, and built of dark-red stone, belonging to Mr. Spedding, whose grandfather was steward to old Sir James Lowther, and bought this estate of the Himers. The sky was overcast and the wind cool; so, after dining at a public-house, which stands here near the bridge (that crosses the Derwent just where it issues from the lake), and sauntering a little by the water-side, I came home again. The turnpike is finished from Cockermouth hither, five miles, and is carrying on to Penrith: several little showers to-day. A man came in, who said there was snow on Cross-fell this morning.

Oct. 7. I walked in the morning to Crow-park, and in the evening up Penrith road. The clouds came rolling up the mountains all round very dark, yet the moon shone at intervals. It was too damp to go towards the lake. To-morrow I mean to bid farewell to Keswick.

Botany might be studied here to great advantage at another season, because of the great variety of soils and elevations, all lying within a small compass. I observed nothing but several curious li-

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omitted to mention the islands on Derwentwater; one of which, I think they call it Vicars' Island, makes a principal object in the scene. See Smith's View of Derwentwater.

chens, and plenty of gale or Dutch myrtle perfuming the borders of the lake. This year the Wadd-mine had been opened, which is done once in five years; it is taken out in lumps sometimes as big as a man's fist, and will undergo no preparation by fire, not being fusible; when it is pure, soft, black, and close-grained, it is worth sometimes thirty shillings a pound. There are no char ever taken in these lakes, but plenty in Buttermere-water, which lies a little way north of Borrowdale, about Martinmas, which are potted here. They sow chiefly oats and bigg here, which are now cutting and still on the ground; the rains have done much hurt: yet observe, the soil is so thin and light, that no day has passed in which I could not walk out with ease, and you know I am no lover of dirt. Fell mutton is now in season for about six weeks; it grows fat on the mountains, and nearly resembles venison. Excellent pike and perch, here called Bass; trout is out of season; partridge in great plenty.

Oct. 8. I left Keswick and took the Ambleside road in a gloomy morning; and about two miles from the town mounted an eminence called Castlerigg, and the sun breaking out, discovered the most enchanting view I have yet seen of the whole valley behind me, the two lakes, the river, the mountains, all in their glory; so that I had almost a mind to have gone back again. The road in some few parts is not completed, yet good country road, through sound but narrow and stony lanes, very safe in broad day-light. This is the case about Causeway-foot, and among Naddle-fells to Lancwaite. The vale you go in has little breadth; the mountains are vast and rocky, the fields little and poor, and the inhabitants are now making hay, and see not the sun by two hours in a day so long as at Keswick. Came to the foot of Helvellyn, along which runs an excellent road, looking down from a little

height on Lee's-water, (called also Thirl-meer, or Wiborn-water) and soon descending on its margin. The lake looks black from its depth, and from the gloom of the vast crags that scowl over it, though really clear as glass; it is narrow, and about three miles long, resembling a river in its course; little shining torrents hurry down the rocks to join it, but not a bush to over-shadow them, or cover their march; all is rock and loose stones up to the very brow, which lies so near your way, that not above half the height of Helvellyn can be seen.

Next I passed by the little chapel of Wiborn, out of which the Sunday congregation were then issuing; soon after a beck near Dunmeil-raise, when I entered Westmoreland a second time; and now began to see Holm-crag, distinguished from its rugged neighbours, not so much by its height as by the strange broken outlines of its top, like some gigantic building demolished, and the stones that composed it flung across each other in wild confusion. Just beyond it opens one of the sweetest landscapes that art ever attempted to imitate. The bosom of the mountains spreading here into a broad basin discovers in the midst Grasmere-water; its margin is hollowed into small bays, with bold eminences; some of rock, some of soft turf, that half conceal, and vary the figure of the little lake they command: from the shore, a low promontory pushes itself far into the water, and on it stands a white village with the parish church rising in the midst of it: hanging inclosures, corn-fields, and meadows green as an emerald, with their trees and hedges, and cattle, fill up the whole space from the edge of the water: and just opposite to you is a large farm-house at the bottom of a steep smooth lawn, embosomed in old woods, which climb half-way up the mountain's side, and discover above them a broken line of crags that crown the scene. Not a single red tile, no flaring gentleman's house,

or garden walls, break in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty in its neatest most becoming attire.

The road winds here over Grasmere-hill, whose rocks soon conceal the water from your sight; yet it is continued along behind them, and contracting itself to a river, communicates with Ridale-water, another small lake, but of inferior size and beauty; it seems shallow too, for large patches of reeds appear pretty far within it. Into this vale the road descends. On the opposite banks large and ancient woods mount up the hills; and just to the left of our way stands Ridale-hall, the family-seat of Sir Michael Fleming, a large old-fashioned fabric, surrounded with wood. Sir Michael is now on his travels, and all this timber, far and wide, belongs to him. Near the house rises a huge crag, called Ridale-head, which is said to command a full view of Wynander-mere, and I doubt it not; for within a mile that great lake is visible, even from the road; as to going up the crag, one might as well go up Skiddaw.

I now reached Ambleside, eighteen miles from Keswick, meaning to lie there; but, on looking into the best bed-chamber, dark and damp as a cellar, grew delicate, gave up Wynander-mere in despair, and resolved I would go on to Kendal directly, fourteen miles farther*. The road in

* By not staying a little at Ambleside, Mr. Gray lost the sight of two most magnificent cascades; the one not above half a mile behind the inn, the other down Ridale-crag, where Sir Michael Fleming is now making a pathway to the top of it. These, when I saw them, were in full torrent, whereas Lawdoor water-fall, which I visited in the evening of the very same day, was almost without a stream. Hence I conclude that this distinguished feature in the vale of Keswick is, like most northern rivers,

general fine turnpike, but some parts (about three miles in all) not made, yet without danger.

For this determination I was unexpectedly well rewarded: for the afternoon was fine, and the road, for the space of full five miles, ran along the side of Wynander-mere, with delicious views across it, and almost from one end to the other. It is ten miles in length, and at most a mile over, resembling the course of some vast and magnificent river; but no flat marshy grounds, no osier-beds, or patches of scrubby plantations on its banks: at the head two valleys open among the mountains; one, that by which we came down; the other Langsledale, in which Wry-nose and Hard-knot, two great mountains, rise above the rest: from thence the fells visibly sink, and soften along its sides; sometimes they run into it (but with a gentle declivity) in their own dark and natural complexion: oftener they are green and cultivated, with farms interspersed, and round eminences, on the border covered with trees: towards the south it seemed to

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only in high beauty during bad weather. But his greatest loss was in not seeing a small water-fall visible only through the window of a ruined summer-house in Sir Michael's orchard. Here Nature has performed every thing in little that she usually executes on her largest scale; and on that account, like the miniature painter, seems to have finished every part of it in a studied manner; not a little fragment of rock thrown into the basin, not a single stem of brushwood that starts from its craggy sides but has its picturesque meaning; and the little central stream dashing down a cleft of the darkest-coloured stone, produces an effect of light and shadow beautiful beyond description. This little theatrical scene might be painted as large as the original, on a canvas not bigger than those which are usually dropped in the Opera-house.

break into larger bays, with several islands and a wider extent of cultivation. The way rises continually, till at a place called Orrest-head it turns south-east, losing sight of the water.

Passed by Ing's-Chapel and Staveley; but I can say no farther, for the dusk of evening coming on, I entered Kendal almost in the dark, and could distinguish only a shadow of the castle on a hill, and tenter-grounds spread far and wide round the town, which I mistook for houses. My inn promised sadly, having two wooden galleries, like Scotland, in front of it: it was indeed an old ill-contrived house, but kept by civil sensible people; so I stayed two nights with them, and fared and slept very comfortably.

Oct. 9. The air mild as summer, all corn off the ground, and the sky-larks singing aloud (by the way, I saw not one at Keswick, perhaps because the place abounds in birds of prey). I went up the castle-hill; the town consists chiefly of three nearly parallel streets, almost a mile long; except these, all the other houses seem as if they had been dancing a country-dance, and were out: there they stand back to back, corner to corner, some up hill, some down, without intent or meaning. Along by their side runs a fine brisk stream, over which are three stone bridges: the buildings (a few comfortable houses excepted) are mean, of stone, and covered with a bad rough-cast. Near the end of the town stands a handsome house of Col. Wilson's, and adjoining to it the church, a very large gothic fabric, with a square tower; it has no particular ornaments but double isles, and at the east end four chapels or choirs; one of the Parrs, another of the Stricklands; the third is the proper choir of the church, and the fourth of the Bellinghams, a family now extinct. There is an altar-tomb of one of them dated 1577, with a flat brass, arms and quarterings; and in the window their arms alone, arg. a hunting-horn, sab. strung gules. In the

Stricklands' chapel several modern monuments, and another old altar-tomb, not belonging to the family: on the side of it a fess dancetty between ten billets, Deincourt. In the Parrs' chapel is a third altar-tomb in the corner, no figure or inscription, but on the side, cut in stone, an escutcheon of Ross of Kendal (three water-budgets), quartering Parr (two bars in a bordure engrailed); 2dly, an escutcheon, vaire, a fess for Marmion; 3dly, an escutcheon, three chevronels braced, and a chief (which I take for Fitzhugh): at the foot is an escutcheon, surrounded with the garter, bearing Roos and Parr quarterly, quartering the other two before-mentioned. I have no books to look in, therefore cannot say whether this is the Lord Parr of Kendal, Queen Catharine's father, or her brother the Marquis of Northampton: perhaps it is a cenotaph for the latter, who was buried at Warwick in 1571. The remains of the castle are seated on a fine hill on the side of the river opposite the town; almost the whole inclosure of the walls remains, with four towers, two square and two round, but their upper part and embattlements are demolished: it is of rough stone and cement, without any ornament or arms, round, inclosing a court of like form, and surrounded by a moat; nor ever could it have been larger than it is, for there are no traces of outworks. There is a good view of the town and river, with a fertile open valley through which it winds.

After dinner I went along the Milthrop turnpike, four miles, to see the falls, or force, of the river Kent; came to Sizergh (pronounced Siser), and turned down a lane to the left. This seat of the Stricklands, an old Catholic family, is an ancient hall-house, with a very large tower embattled; the rest of the buildings added to it are of later date, but all is white, and seen to advantage on a back ground of old trees; there is a small park also, well wooded. Opposite to this, turning to the left, I

soon came to the river; it works its way in a narrow and deep rocky channel overhung with trees. The calmness and brightness of the evening, the roar of the waters, and the thumping of huge hammers at an iron-forge not far distant, made it a singular walk; but as to the falls (for there are two) they are not four feet high. I went on, down to the forge, and saw the demons at work by the light of their own fires: the iron is brought in pigs to Milthrop by sea from Scotland, &c. and is here beat into bars and plates. Two miles further, at Levens, is the seat of Lord Suffolk, where he sometimes passes the summer: it was a favourite place of his late countess; but this I did not see.

Oct. 10. I proceeded by Burton to Lancaster, twenty-two miles; very good country, well inclosed and wooded, with some common interspersed. Passed at the foot of Farlton-knot, a high fell four miles north of Lancaster; on a rising ground called Boulton (pronounced Bouton) we had a full view of Cartmell-sands, with here and there a passenger riding over them (it being low water); the points of Furness shooting far into the sea, and lofty mountains, partly covered with clouds, extending north of them. Lancaster also appeared very conspicuous and fine; for its most distinguished features, the castle and church, mounted on a green eminence, were all that could be seen. Woe is me! when I got thither, it was the second day of their fair; the inn, in the principal street, was a great old gloomy house full of people; but I found tolerable quarters, and even slept two nights in peace.

In a fine afternoon I ascended the castle-hill; it takes up the higher top of the eminence on which it stands, and is irregularly round, encompassed with a deep moat: in front, towards the town, is a magnificent gothic gateway, lofty and huge; the overhanging battlements are supported by a triple range of corbels, the intervals pierced through, and

showing the day from above. On its top rise light watch-towers of small height. It opens below with a grand pointed arch: over this is a wrought tabernacle, doubtless once containing its founder's figure; on one side a shield of France semi-quartered with England; on the other the same, with a label, ermine, for John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. This opens to a court within, which I did not much care to enter, being the county-gaol, and full of prisoners, both criminals and debtors. From this gateway the walls continue and join it to a vast square tower of great height, the lower part at least of remote antiquity; for it has small round-headed lights with plain short pillars on each side of them: there is a third tower, also square and of less dimensions. This is all the castle. Near it, and but little lower, stands the church, a large and plain gothic fabric; the high square tower at the west end has been rebuilt of late years, but nearly in the same style: there are no ornaments of arms, &c. any where to be seen: within, it is lightsome and spacious, but not one monument of antiquity, or piece of painted glass, is left. From the church-yard there is an extensive sea-view (for now the tide had almost covered the sands, and filled the river), and besides the greatest part of Furness, I could distinguish Peel-castle on the isle of Fowdrey, which lies off its southern extremity. The town is built on the slope, and at the foot of the castle-hill, more than twice the bigness of Aukland, with many neat buildings of white stone, but a little disorderly in their position, and, 'ad libitum,' like Kendal: many also extend below on the keys by the river-side, where a number of ships were moored, some of them three-masted vessels decked out with their colours in honour of the fair. Here is a good bridge of four arches over the Lune, that runs, when the tide is out, in two streams divided by a bed of gravel, which is not covered but in spring-tides; below the town it widens to

near the breadth of the Thames at London, and meets the sea at five or six miles distance to south-west.

Oct. 11. I crossed the river and walked over a peninsula, three miles, to the village of Pooton, which stands on the beach. An old fisherman mending his nets (while I inquired about the danger of passing those sands) told me, in his dialect, a moving story; how a brother of the trade, a cockler, as he styled him, driving a little cart with two daughters (women grown) in it, and his wife on horseback following, set out one day to pass the seven-mile sands, as they had frequently been used to do, (for nobody in the village knew them better than the old man did; when they were about half-way over, a thick fog rose, and as they advanced they found the water much deeper than they expected: the old man was puzzled; he stopped, and said he would go a little way to find some mark he was acquainted with; they staid awhile for him; but in vain; they called aloud, but no reply: at last the young women pressed their mother to think where they were, and go on; she would not leave the place; she wandered about forlorn and amazed; she would not quit her horse and get into the cart with them: they determined, after much time wasted, to turn back, and give themselves up to the guidance of their horses. The old woman was soon washed off, and perished; the poor girls clung close to their cart, and the horse, sometimes wading and sometimes swimming, brought them back to land alive, but senseless with terror and distress, and unable for many days to give any account of themselves. The bodies of their parents were found next ebb; that of the father a very few paces distant from the spot where he had left them.

In the afternoon I wandered about the town, and by the key, till it grew dark.

Oct. 12. I set out for Settle by a fine turnpike-road, twenty-nine miles, through a rich and

beautiful inclosed country, diversified with frequent villages and churches, very unequal ground; and on the left the river Lune winding in a deep valley, its hanging banks clothed with fine woods, through which you catch long reaches of the water, as the road winds about at a considerable height above it. In the most picturesque part of the way, I passed the park belonging to the Hon. Mr. Clifford, a Catholic. The grounds between him and the river are indeed charming*; the house is ordinary, and the park nothing but a rocky fell scattered over with ancient hawthorns. Next I came to Hornby, a little town on the river Wanning, over which a handsome bridge is now building; the castle, in a lordly situation, attracted me, so I walked up the hill to it: first presents itself a large white ordinary sashed gentleman's house, and behind it rises the ancient Keep, built by Edward Stanley, Lord Monteagle. He died about 1529, in King Henry the Eighth's time. It is now only a shell; the rafters are laid within it as for flooring. I went up a winding stone staircase in one corner to the leads, and at the angle is a single hexagon watch-tower, rising some feet higher, fitted up in

* This scene opens just three miles from Lancaster, on what is called the Queen's Road. To see the view in perfection, you must go into a field on the left. Here Ingleborough, behind a variety of lesser mountains, makes the back-ground of the prospect: on each hand of the middle distance rise two sloping hills; the left clothed with thick woods, the right with variegated rock and herbage: between them, in the most fertile of valleys, the Lune serpentizes for many a mile, and comes forth ample and clear, through a well-wooded and richly-pastured fore-ground. Every feature, which constitutes a perfect landscape of the extensive sort, is here not only boldly marked, but also in its best position.

the taste of a modern summer-house, with sash-windows in gilt frames, a stucco cupola, and on the top a vast gilt eagle, built by Mr. Charteris, the present possessor. He is the second son of the Earl of Wemys, brother to the Lord Elcho, and grandson to Col. Charteris, whose name he bears.

From the leads of the tower there is a fine view of the country round, and much wood near the castle. Ingleborough, which I had seen before distinctly at Lancaster to north-east, was now completely wrapped in clouds, all but its summit; which might have been easily mistaken for a long black cloud too, fraught with an approaching storm. Now our road began gradually to mount towards the Apennine, the trees growing less and thinner of leaves, till we came to Ingleton, eighteen miles; it is a pretty village, situated very high, and yet in a valley at the foot of that huge monster of nature, Ingleborough: two torrents cross it, with great stones rolled along their beds instead of water; and over them are flung two handsome arches. The nipping air, though the afternoon was growing very bright, now taught us we were in Craven; the road was all up and down, though nowhere very steep; to the left were mountain-tops, to the righ ta wide valley, all inclosed ground, and beyond it high hills again. In approaching Settle, the crags on the left drew nearer to our way, till we descended Brunton-brow into a cheerful valley (though thin of trees) to Giggleswick, a village with a small piece of water by its side, covered over with coots; near it a church, which belongs also to Settle; and half a mile farther, having passed the Ribble over a bridge, I arrived there; it is a small market-town standing directly under a rocky fell; there are not in it above a dozen good-looking houses, the rest are old and low, with little wooden porticos in front. My inn pleased me much, (though small) for the

neatness and civility of the good woman that kept it; so I lay there two nights, and went,

Oct. 13. To visit Gordale-scar, which lay six miles from Settle; but that way was directly over a fell, and as the weather was not to be depended on, I went round in a chaise, the only way one could get near it in a carriage, which made it full thirteen miles, half of it such a road! but I got safe over it, so there's an end, and came to Malham (pronounced Maum) a village in the bosom of the mountains, seated in a wild and dreary valley. From thence I was to walk a mile over very rough ground, a torrent rattling along on the left hand; on the cliffs above hung a few goats; one of them danced and scratched an ear with its hind foot in a place where I would not have stood stock-still

For all beneath the moon.

As I advanced, the crags seemed to close in, but discovered a narrow entrance turning to the left between them: I followed my guide a few paces, and the hills opened again into no large space; and then all farther way is barred by a stream that, at the height of about fifty feet, gushes from a hole in the rock, and spreading in large sheets over its broken front, dashes from steep to steep, and then rattles away in a torrent down the valley: the rock on the left rises perpendicular, with stubbed yew-trees and shrubs staring from its side, to the height of at least 300 feet; but these are not the thing: it is the rock to the right, under which you stand to see the fall, that forms the principal horror of the place. From its very base it begins to slope forwards over you in one block or solid mass without any crevice in its surface, and overshadows half the area below with its dreadful canopy; when I stood at (I believe) four yards distance from its foot, the drops, which perpetually distil from its brow, fell on my head; and in one part of its

top, more exposed to the weather, there are loose stones that hang in air, and threaten visibly some idle spectator with instant destruction; it is safer to shelter yourself close to its bottom, and trust to the mercy of that enormous mass which nothing but an earthquake can stir. The gloomy uncomfortable day well suited the savage aspect of the place, and made it still more formidable: I stayed there, not without shuddering, a quarter of an hour, and thought my trouble richly paid; for the impression will last for life. At the alehouse where I dined in Malham, Vivares, the landscape-painter, had lodged for a week or more; Smith and Bellers had also been there, and two prints of Gordale have been engraved by them.

Oct. 14. Leaving my comfortable inn, to which I had returned from Gordale, I set out for Skipton, sixteen miles. From several parts of the road, and in many places about Settle, I saw at once the three famous hills of this country, Ingleborough, Penigent, and Pendle; the first is esteemed the highest, and their features not to be described but by the pencil*.

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* Without the pencil nothing indeed is to be described with precision; and even then that pencil ought to be in the very hand of the writer, ready to supply with outlines every thing that his pen cannot express by words. As far as language can describe, Mr. Gray has, I think, pushed its powers: for rejecting, as I before hinted, every general unmeaning and hyperbolical phrase, he has selected (both in this journal, and on other similar occasions) the plainest, simplest, and most direct terms: yet notwithstanding his judicious care in the use of these, I must own I feel them defective. They present me, it is true, with a picture of the same species, but not with the identical picture: my imagination receives clear and distinct, but not true and exact images. It may be asked, then, why

Craven, after all, is an unpleasing country when seen from a height; its valleys are chiefly wide, and either marshy or inclosed pasture, with a few trees. Numbers of black cattle are fatted here, both of the Scotch breed, and a larger sort of oxen

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am I entertained by well-written descriptions? I answer, because they amuse when they do not inform me; and because, after I have seen the places described, they serve to recal to my memory the original scene, almost as well as the truest drawing or picture. In the meanwhile, my mind is flattered by thinking it has acquired some conception of the place, and rests contented in an innocent error, which nothing but ocular proof can detect, and which, when detected, does not diminish the pleasure I had before received, but augments it by super-adding the charms of comparison and verification; and herein I would place the real and only merit of verbal prose description. To speak of poetical, would lead me beyond the limits as well as the purpose of this note. I cannot, however, help adding, that I have seen one piece of verbal description which completely satisfies me, because it is throughout assisted by masterly delineation. It is composed by the Rev. Mr. Gilpin, of Cheam in Surry; and contains, amongst other places, an account of the very scenes, which, in this tour, our author visited. This gentleman, possessing the conjoined talent of a writer and a designer, has employed them in this manuscript to every purpose of picturesque beauty, in the description of which, a correct eye, a practised pencil, and an eloquent pen could assist him. He has, consequently, produced a work *unique* in its kind. But I have said it is in manuscript, and, I am afraid, likely to continue so; for would his modesty permit him to print it, the great expense of plates would make its publication almost impracticable.

with great horns. There is little cultivated ground, except a few oats.

Skipton, to which I went through Long-Preston and Gargrave, is a pretty large market town, in a valley, with one very broad street gently sloping downwards from the castle, which stands at the head of it. This is one of our good countess's buildings *, but on old foundations; it is not very large, but of a handsome antique appearance, with round towers, a grand gateway, bridge, and moat, surrounded by many old trees. It is in good repair, and kept up as a habitation of the Earl of Thanet, though he rarely comes thither: what with the sleet, and a foolish dispute about chaises, that delayed me, I did not see the inside of it, but went on, fifteen miles, to Otley; first up Shode-bank, the steepest hill I ever saw a road carried over in England, for it mounts in a straight line (without any other repose for the horses than by placing stones every now and then behind the wheels) for a full mile; then the road goes on a level along the brow of this high hill over Rumbald-moor, till it gently descends into Wharldale, so they call the vale of the Wharf, and a beautiful vale it is, well-wooded, well-cultivated, well-inhabited, but with high crags at a distance, that border the green country on either hand; through the midst of it, deep, clear, full to the brink, and of no inconsiderable breadth, runs in long windings the river. How it comes to pass that it should be so fine and copious a stream here, and at Tadcaster (so much lower) should have nothing but a wide stony channel without water, I cannot tell you. I passed through Long-Addingham, Ilkeley (pronounced Eecly), distinguished by a lofty brow of loose rocks to the right; Burley, a neat and pretty village, among trees; on the opposite side of the river lay Middleton-Lodge, belonging to a

* Anne Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery.

catholic gentleman of that name; Weston, a venerable stone fabric, with large offices, of Mr. Vavasour, the meadows in front gently descending to the water, and behind a great and shady wood; Farnley (Mr. Fawkes's), a place like the last, but larger, and rising higher on the side of the hill. Otley is a large airy town, with clean but low rustic buildings, and a bridge over the Wharf: I went into its spacious Gothic church, which has been new-roofed, with a flat stucco ceiling; in a corner of it is the monument of Thomas Lord Fairfax, and Helen Aske, his lady, descended from the Cliffords and Latimers, as her epitaph says; the figures, not ill-cut (particularly his in armour, but bare-headed), lie on the tomb. I take them to be the parents of the famous Sir Thomas Fairfax.

LETTER V.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

April 18, 1770.

I HAVE utterly forgot where my Journal left off, but I think it was after the account of Gordale, near Settle; if so, there was little more worth your notice: the principal things were Wharldale, in the way from Skipton to Otley, and Kirkstall abbey, three miles from Leeds * * * *†. Kirkstall is a noble ruin, in the semi-saxon style of building, as old as King Stephen, towards the end of his reign, 1152. The whole church is still standing, the roof

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* Here a paragraph, describing Wharldale in the foregoing Journal, was repeated.

excepted, seated in a delicious quiet valley, on the banks of the river Aire, and preserved with religious reverence by the Duke of Montagu. Adjoining to the church, between that and the river, are variety of chapels and remnants of the abbey, shattered by the encroachments of the ivy, and surrounded by many a sturdy tree, whose twisted roots break through the fret of the vaulting, and hang streaming from the roofs. The gloom of these ancient cells, the shade and verdure of the landscape, the glittering and murmur of the stream, the lofty towers and long perspectives of the church, in the midst of a clear bright day, detained me for many hours; and were the truest objects for my glass I have yet met with any where. As I lay at that smoky, ugly, busy town of Leeds, I dropped all further thoughts of my Journal; and after passing two days at Mason's (though he was absent) pursued my way by Nottingham, Leicester, Harborough, Kettering, Thrapston, and Huntingdon to Cambridge, where I arrived on the 22d of October, having met with no rain to signify till this last day of my journey. There's luck for you!

I do think of seeing Wales this summer, having never found my spirits lower than at present, and feeling that motion and change of the scene is absolutely necessary to me; I will make Aston in my way to Chester, and shall rejoice to meet you there the last week in May. Mason writes me word that he wishes it; and though his old house is down, and his new one not up, proposes to receive us like princes in grain.

LETTER VI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. NICHOLLS*.

I RECEIVED your letter at Southampton; and as I would wish to treat every body according to their own rule and measure of good breeding, have, against my inclination, waited till now before I answered it, purely out of fear and respect, and an ingenuous diffidence of my own abilities. If you will not take this as an excuse, accept it at least as a well-turned period, which is always my principal concern.

So I proceed to tell you that my health is much improved by the sea, not that I drank it, or bathed in it, as the common people do: no! I only walked by it, and looked upon it. The climate is remarkably mild, even in October and November; no snow has been seen to lie there for these thirty years past; the myrtles grow in the ground against the houses, and Guernsey lilies bloom in every window: the town, clean and well-built, surrounded by its old stone walls, with their towers and gateways, stands at the point of a peninsula, and opens full south to an arm of the sea, which, having formed two beautiful bays on each hand of it, stretches away in direct view, till it joins the British Channel; it is skirted on either side with gently-rising grounds, clothed with thick wood, and directly cross its mouth rise the high lands of

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* This letter was written on the 19th of November, 1764; but as it delineates another abbey, in a different manner, it seems to make no improper companion to that which precedes it.

the Isle of Wight at distance, but distinctly seen. In the bosom of the woods (concealed from profane eyes) lie hid the ruins of Nettley abbey: there may be richer and greater houses of religion, but the abbot is content with his situation. See there, at the top of that hanging meadow, under the shade of those old trees that bend into a half circle about it, he is walking slowly (good man!) and bidding his beads for the souls of his benefactors, interred in that venerable pile that lies beneath him. Beyond it (the meadow still descending) nods a thicket of oaks that mask the building, and have excluded a view too garish and luxuriant for a holy eye; only on either hand they leave an opening to the blue glittering sea. Did you not observe how, as that white sail shot by and was lost, he turned and crossed himself to drive the tempter from him that had thrown that distraction in his way? I should tell you that the ferryman who rowed me, a lusty young fellow, told me that he would not for all the world pass a night at the abbey (there were such things seen near it) though there was a power of money hid there. From thence I went to Salisbury, Wilton, and Stonehenge: but of these things I say no more; they will be published at the university press.

P. S. I must not close my letter without giving you one principal event of my history; which was, that (in the course of my late tour) I set out one morning before five o'clock, the moon shining through a dark and misty autumnal air, and got to the sea-coast time enough to be at the Sun's levee. I saw the clouds and dark vapours open gradually to right and left, rolling over one another in great smoky wreathes, and the tide (as it flowed gently in upon the sands) first whitening, then slightly tinged with gold and blue; and all at once a little line of insufferable brightness that (before I can write these five words) was grown to half an orb, and now to a

whole one, too glorious to be distinctly seen *. It is very odd it makes no figure on paper; yet I shall remember it as long as the sun, or at least as long as I endure. I wonder whether any body ever saw it before? I hardly believe it.

LETTER VII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. BEATTIE.

Pembroke-Hall, July 2, 1770.

I REJOICE to hear that you are restored to better state of health, to your books, and to your muse once again. That forced dissipation and exercise we are obliged to fly to as a remedy, when this frail machine goes wrong, is often almost as bad as the distemper we would cure; yet I too have been constrained of late to pursue a like regimen, on account of certain pains in the head (a sensation unknown to me before), and of great dejection of spirits. This, sir, is the only excuse I have to

* This puts me in mind of a similar description written by Dr. Jeremy Taylor, which I shall here beg leave to present to the reader, who will find by it that the old divine had occasionally as much power of description as even our modern poet. 'As when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness; gives light to the cock, and calls up the lark to matins; and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns * * *; and still (while a man tells the story) the sun gets up higher till he shows a fair face and a full light.' J. Taylor's Holy Dying, p. 17.

make you for my long silence, and not (as perhaps you may have figured to yourself) any secret reluctance I had to tell you my mind concerning the specimen you so kindly sent me of your new poem*: on the contrary, if I had seen any thing of importance to disapprove, I should have hastened to inform you, and never doubted of being forgiven. The truth is, I greatly like all I have seen, and wish to see more. The design is simple, and pregnant with poetical ideas of various kinds, yet seems somehow imperfect at the end. Why may not young Edwin, when necessity has driven him to take up the harp, and assume the profession of a minstrel, do some great and singular service to his country? (what service I must leave to your invention) such as no general, no statesman, no moralist could do without the aid of music, inspiration, and poetry. This will not appear an improbability in those early times, and in a character then held sacred, and respected by all nations: besides, it will be a full answer to all the hermit has said, when he dissuaded him from cultivating these pleasing arts; it will show their use, and make the best panegyric of our favourite and celestial science. And lastly (what weighs most with me), it will throw more of action, pathos, and interest into your design, which already abounds in reflection and sentiment. As to description, I have always thought that it made the most graceful ornament of poetry, but never ought to make the subject. Your ideas are new, and borrowed from a mountainous country, the only one that can furnish truly picturesque scenery. Some trifles in

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* This letter was written in answer to one that inclosed only a part of the first book of the Minstrel in manuscript, and I believe a sketch of Mr. Beattie's plan for the whole.

the language or versification you will permit me to remark *.

I will not enter at present into the merits of your *Essay on Truth*, because I have not yet given it all the attention it deserves, though I have read it through with pleasure; besides, I am partial; for I have always thought David Hume a pernicious writer, and believe he has done as much mischief here as he has in his own country. A turbid and shallow stream often appears to our apprehensions very deep. A professed sceptic can be guided by nothing but his present passions (if he has any) and interests; and to be masters of his philosophy we need not his books or advice, for every child is capable of the same thing, without any study at all. Is not that *naïveté* and good humour, which his admirers celebrate in him, owing to this, that he has continued all his days an infant, but one that unhappily has been taught to read and write? That childish nation, the French, have given him vogue and fashion, and we, as usual, have learned from them to admire him at second hand †.

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* A few paragraphs of particular criticism are here omitted.

† On a similar subject Mr. Gray expresses himself thus in a letter to Mr. Walpole, dated March 17, 1771: 'He must have a very good stomach that can digest the *Crambe recocta* of Voltaire. Atheism is a vile dish, though all the cooks of France combine to make new sauces to it. As to the soul, perhaps they may have none on the continent; but I do think we have such things in England. Shakspeare, for example, I believe had several to his own share. As to the Jews (though they do not eat pork), I like them because they are better Christians than Voltaire.' This was written only three months before his death; and I insert it to

LETTER VIII.

MR. GRAY TO MR. HOW *.

Cambridge, Sept. 10, 1763.

I OUGHT long since to have made you my acknowledgments for the obliging testimonies of your

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show how constant and uniform he was in his contempt of infidel writers. Dr. Beattie received only one letter more from his correspondent, dated March 8, 1771. It related to the first book of the Minstrel, now sent to him in print, and contained criticisms on particular passages, and commendations of particular stanzas. Those criticisms the author attended to in a future edition, because his good taste found that they deserved his attention; the passages therefore being altered, the strictures die of course. As to the notes of commendation, the poem itself abounds with so many striking beauties, that they need not even the hand of Mr. Gray to point them out to a reader of any feeling: all therefore that I shall print of that letter is the concluding paragraph relating to his Essay on the Immutability of Truth. 'I am happy to hear of your success in another way, because I think you are serving the cause of human nature, and the true interests of mankind; your book is read here too, and with just applause.'

* This letter and the following, if received earlier, would have found their place, according to their dates, in the fourth Section; but I choose rather to print them here, out of place, than to reserve them for another edition, that the purchasers of this may not have hereafter cause to complain that the book was incomplete.

esteem that you have conferred upon me; but Count Algarotti's books * did not come to my hands till the end of July, and since that time I have been prevented by illness from doing any of my duties. I have read them more than once, with increasing satisfaction; and should wish mankind had eyes to descry the genuine sources of their own pleasures, and judgment to know the extent that nature has prescribed to them: if this were the case, it would be their interest to appoint Count Algarotti their 'Arbiter Elegantiarum.' He is highly civil to our nation; but there is one point in which he does not do us justice: I am the more solicitous about it, because it relates to the only taste we can call our own; the only proof of our original talent in matter of pleasure, I mean our skill in gardening, or rather laying out grounds; and this is no small honour to us, since neither Italy nor France have ever had the least notion of it, nor yet do at all comprehend it when they see it. That the Chinese have this beautiful art in high perfection seems very probable from the Jesuits' Letters, and more from Chambers's little discourse, published some years ago †; but it is very certain we copied nothing from them, nor had any thing but nature for our model. It is not forty years since the art was born among us ‡; and

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* Three small treatises on Painting, the Opera, and the French Academy for Painters in Italy; they have been since collected in the Leghorn edition of his works.

† The author has since enlarged and published it under the title of a Dissertation on Oriental Gardening; in which he has put it out of all doubt, that the Chinese and English tastes are totally dissimilar.

‡ See Mr. Walpole's history of this art at the end of the last volume of his Anecdotes of Painters, when he favours the world with its publication.

it is sure that there was nothing in Europe like it; and as sure, we then had no information on this head from China at all *.

I shall rejoice to see you in England, and talk over these and many other matters with you at leisure. Do not despair of your health, because you have not found all the effects you had promised yourself from a finer climate. I have known people who have experienced the same thing, and yet, at their return, have lost all their complaints as by miracle.

P. S. I have answered Count Algarotti's letter, and his to Mr. Mason I conveyed to him; but whether he has received his books, I have not yet heard.

Mr. How, on receiving the foregoing letter, communicated the objection which it contained to the count; who, admitting the justness of it, altered the passage, as appears from the following extract of the answer which he sent to that gentleman.

'Mi spiace solamente che quella critica concernente i Giardini Inglesi non la abbia fatta à me medesimo; quasi egli dovesse credermi piu amico

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* I question whether this be not saying too much. Sir William Temple's account of the Chinese gardens was published some years before this period; and it is probable that might have promoted our endeavours, not indeed of imitating them, but of imitating (what he said was their archetype) Nature.

della mia opinione che della verità. Ecco, come ho cangiato qual luogo. Dopo le parole *nel tesser la favola di un poema*. 'Simili ai Giardini della Cina sono quelli che piantano gl' Inglesi dietro al medesimo modello della Natura.' Quanto ella ha di vago, è di vario, boschetti, collinette, acque vive, praterie con dei tempietti, degli obelischi, ed anche di belle rovine che spuntano quà e là, si trova quivi reunito dal gusto dei Kent, e dei Chambers *, che hanno di tanto sorpassato il le Nature, tenuto già il maestro dell' Architettura, diro cosi, dè Giardini. Dalle Ville d'Inghilterra è sbandita la simmetria Francese, i più bei siti pajono naturali, il culto è misto col negletto, è il disordine che vi regna è l'effetto dell' arte la meglio ordinata.'

It is seldom that an author of a reputation so established (as Mr. How truly remarked, when he sent this extract to Mr. Gray) so easily, readily, and explicitly gives up his own opinion to that of another, or even to conviction itself; nor perhaps would Count Algarotti have done so, had he not been thoroughly apprized to whose correction he submitted.

LETTER IX.

MR. GRAY TO MR. HOW.

Pembroke-Hall, Jan. 12, 1768.

I WAS willing to go through the eight volumes of Count Algarotti's works, which you lately pre-

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* As he had written on the subject, this mistake was natural enough in Count Algarotti.

sented to the library of this College, before I returned you an answer; this must be my excuse to you for my silence. First I condole with you, that so neat an edition should swarm in almost every page with errors of the press, not only in notes and citations from Greek, English, and French authors, but in the Italian text itself, greatly to the disreputation of the Leghorn publishers. This is the only reason, I think, that could make an edition in England necessary; but, I doubt, you would not find the matter much mended here; our presses, as they improve in beauty, declining daily in accuracy; besides, you would find the expense very considerable, and the sale in no proportion to it, as, in reality, it is but few people in England that read currently and with pleasure the Italian tongue, and the fine old editions of their capital writers are sold at London for a lower price than they bear in Italy. An English translation I can by no means advise; the justness of thought and good sense might remain, but the graces of elocution (which make a great part of Algarotti's merit) would be entirely lost, and that merely from the very different genius and complexion of the two languages.

Doubtless there can be no impropriety in your making the same present to the University that you have done to your own College. You need not at all to fear for the reputation of your friend; he has merit enough to recommend him in any country. A tincture of various sorts of knowledge, an acquaintance with all the beautiful arts, an easy command, a precision, warmth, and richness of expression, and a judgment that is rarely mistaken on any subject to which he applies it. I had read the *Congresso de Citera* before, and was excessively pleased with it, in spite of prejudice; for I am naturally no friend to allegory, nor to poetical prose. The *Giudicio d'Amore* is an addition rather inferior to it. What gives me the least pleasure of

any of his writings is the *Newtonianism;* it is so direct an imitation of Fontenelle, a writer not easy to imitate, and least of all in the Italian tongue, whose character and graces are of a higher style, and never adapt themselves easily to the elegant *badinage* and *legereté* of conversation that sit so well on the French. The essays and letters (many of them entirely new to me) *on the Arts*, are curious and entertaining: those on other subjects (even where the thoughts are not new, but borrowed from his various reading and conversation), often better put, and better expressed than in the originals. I rejoice when I see Machiavel defended or illustrated, who to me appears one of the wisest men that any nation in any age has produced. Most of the other discourses, military or political, are well worth reading, though that on Kouli-Khan was a mere jeu d'esprit, a sort of historical exercise. The letters from Russia I had read before with pleasure, particularly the narrative of Munick's and Lascy's campaigns. The detached thoughts are often new and just; but there should have been a revisal of them, as they are frequently to be found in his letters repeated in the very same words. Some too of the familiar letters might have been spared. The verses are not equal to the prose, but they are above mediocrity.

LETTER X*.

MR. GRAY TO MR. NICHOLLS.

IT is long since that I heard you were gone in haste into Yorkshire on account of your mother's illness, and the same letter informed me that she was recovered, otherwise I had then wrote to you only to beg you would take care of her, and to inform you that I had discovered a thing very little known, which is, that in one's whole life one can never have any more than a single mother. You may think this is obvious, and (what you call) a trite observation. You are a green gosling! I was at the same age (very near) as wise as you, and yet I never discovered this (with full evidence and conviction I mean) till it was too late. Is is thirteen years ago, and seems but as yesterday, and every day I live it sinks deeper into my heart †. Many a corollary could I draw from this axiom for your use (not for my own), but I will leave you the merit of doing it for yourself. Pray tell me how your health is: I conclude it perfect, as I hear

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* This letter was written some years before, and would have been inserted after Letter LIII. of the fourth Section, if received in time.

† He seldom mentioned his mother without a sigh. After his death her gowns and wearing apparel were found in a trunk in his apartments just as she had left them; it seemed as if he could never take the resolution to open it, in order to distribute them to his female relations, to whom, by his will, he bequeathed them.

you offered yourself as a guide to Mr. Palgrave into the Sierra-Morena of Yorkshire. For me, I passed the end of May and all June in Kent, not disagreeably. In the west part of it, from every eminence, the eye catches some long reach of the Thames or Medway, with all their shipping: in the east the sea breaks in upon you, and mixes its white transient sails and glittering blue expanse with the deeper and brighter greens of the woods and corn. This sentence is so fine I am quite ashamed; but no matter! You must translate it into prose. Palgrave, if he heard it, would cover his face with his pudding sleeve. I do not tell you of the great and small beasts, and creeping things innumerable, that I met with, because you do not suspect that this world is inhabited by any thing but men, and women, and clergy, and such two-legged cattle. Now I am here again very disconsolate, and all alone, for Mr. Brown is gone, and the cares of this world are coming thick upon me: you, I hope, are better off, riding and walking in the woods of Studley, &c. &c. I must not wish for you here; besides I am going to town at Michaelmas, by no means for amusement.

LETTER XI.

MR. GRAY TO MR. NICHOLLS.

Pembroke-Hall, Jan. 26, 1771.

I REJOICE you have met with Froissart; he is the Herodotus of a barbarous age: had he but had the luck of writing in as good a language, he might have been immortal! His locomotive disposition

(for then there was no other way of learning things), his simple curiosity, his religious credulity, were much like those of the old Grecian *. When you have *tant chevauché*, as to get to the end of him, there is Monstrelet waits to take you up, and will set you down at Philip de Comines; but previous to all these, you should have read Villehardouin and Joinville. I do not think myself bound to defend the character of even the best of kings †: pray slash them all, and spare not.

It would be strange too if I should blame your Greek studies, or find fault with you for reading Isocrates; I did so myself twenty years ago, and in an edition at least as bad as yours. The Panegyric, the de Pace, Areopagitic, and Advice to Philip, are by far the noblest remains we have of this writer, and equal to most things extant in the Greek tongue; but it depends on your judgment to distinguish between his real and occasional opinion of things, as he directly contradicts in one place what he has advanced in another: for example, in the Panathenaic, and the de Pace, &c. on the naval power of Athens; the latter of the two is undoubtedly his own undisguised sentiment.

I would by all means wish you to comply with your friend's request, and write the letter he desires. I trust to the cause and to the warmth of your own kindness for inspiration. Write eloquently, that is, from your heart, in such expressions as that will furnish ‡. Men sometimes catch that

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* See more of his opinion of this author, Section IV. Letter XXXVI.

† I suppose his correspondent had made some strictures on the character of Henry IV. of France. See Section IV. Letter XXII.

‡ This short sentence contains a complete definition of natural eloquence; when it becomes an

feeling from a stranger which should have originally sprung from their own heart.

LETTER XII.

MR. GRAY TO DR. WHARTON.

May 24, 1771.

MY last summer's tour was through Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire, five of the most beautiful counties in the kingdom. The very principal light and capital feature of my journey was the river Wye, which I descended in a boat for near forty miles from Ross to Chepstow. Its banks are a succession of nameless beauties; one out of many you may see not ill described by Mr. Whately, in his Observations on Gardening, under the name of the New-Weir: he has also touched upon two others, Tinterne Abbey and Persfield, both of them famous scenes, and both on the Wye. Monmouth, a town I never heard mentioned, lies on the same river, in

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art it requires one more prolix, and our author seems to have begun to sketch it on a detached paper. 'Its province (says he) is to reign over minds of slow perception and little imagination, to set things in lights they never saw them in; to engage their attention by details and circumstances gradually unfolded, to adorn and heighten them with images and colours unknown to them, and to raise and engage their rude passions to the point to which the speaker wishes to bring them.'* * *

a vale that is the delight of my eyes, and the very seat of pleasure. The vale of Abergavenny, Ragland, and Chepstow castles; Ludlow, Malvern-hills, Hampton-court, near Lemster; the Leasows, Hagley, the three cities and their cathedrals; and lastly Oxford (where I passed two days on my return with great satisfaction) were the rest of my acquisitions, and no bad harvest in my opinion; but I made no journal myself, else you should have had it: I have indeed a short one written by the companion of my travels*, that serves to recall and fix the fleeting images of these things.

I have had a cough upon me these three months, which is incurable. The approaching summer I have sometimes had thoughts of spending on the continent; but I have now dropped that intention, and believe my expeditions will terminate in Old Park: but I make no promise, and can answer for nothing; my own employment so sticks in my stomach, and troubles my conscience: and yet travel I must, or cease to exist. Till this year I hardly knew what (mechanical) low spirits were, but now I even tremble at an east wind.

This is the last letter which I have selected for this Section; and I insert it chiefly for the occasion which it affords me of commenting on the latter part of it, where he speaks of his own employment as Professor of Modern History; an office which he had now held nearly three years, and had not begun to execute the duties of it. His health,

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* Mr. Nicholls.

which was all the time gradually on the decline, and his spirits only supported by the frequent summer excursions, during this period, might, to the candid reader, be a sufficient apology for this omission, or rather procrastination: but there is more to be said in his excuse; and I should ill execute the office I have undertaken of arranging these papers, with a view of doing honour to his memory, if I did not endeavour to remove every exception that might, with a show of reason, be taken to his conduct in this instance.

His business, as Professor, consisted of two parts; one, the teaching of modern languages; the other, the reading of lectures on Modern History. The patent, which created the office, authorized him to execute the former of these by deputies; the latter, the same patent prescribed to him, to commence by reading a public lecture in the schools, and to continue to do so once at least in every term. As this patent did not ascertain the language in which the lecture was to be read, he was at liberty to do it either in Latin or English; he chose the former, and I think rather injudiciously; because, though no man, in the earlier part of his life, was more ready in Latin composition, he had now lost the habit, and might therefore well have excused himself, by the nature of his subject, from any superadded difficulty of language. However, immediately on his appointment, he sketched out an admirable plan for his inauguration speech; in which, after enumerating the preparatory and auxiliary studies requisite, such as Ancient History, Geography, Chronology, &c. * he descended to the

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* Amongst these auxiliaries, he has set down *Memoria Technica;* an art in which he had much exercised himself when young. I find many memorial verses among his scattered papers: and I

authentic sources of the science, such as Public Treaties—State Records—Private Correspondence of Ambassadors, &c. He also wrote the Exordium of this Thesis; not indeed in a manner correct enough to be here given by way of fragment: but so spirited, in point of sentiment, as leaves it much to be lamented, that he did not proceed to its completion. At the same time he drew up, and laid before the Duke of Grafton, just then chosen Chancellor of the University, three different schemes for regulating the method of choosing pupils privately to be instructed by him: one of these was so much approved as to be sent to Oxford, in order to be* deliberated upon by the Vice-chancellor and heads of Colleges for a similar purpose: and the same plan, or something like it, I believe, regulates the private lectures which Mr. Gray's successor now reads at Cambridge; but the public ones are only given at Oxford: and yet I conceive, that on these (had Mr. Gray been appointed earlier in life to the office) he would have chosen chiefly to exert his uncommon abilities. Indeed, if we consider the nature of the study itself, Modern History, so far as it is a detail of facts (and so far only, a boy just come from school can be supposed to be taught it), may be as com-

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suspect he found good account in the practice; for few men were more ready and accurate in their dates of events than our author.

* This sentence is altered from the former editions, on intelligence since received from Dr. Noel, the present Professor of Modern History at Oxford. The editor had there said, that 'he believed the public lectures were still omitted in *both* Universities.' Whereas the truth is, that the Oxford Professor reads an annual course of fifty private lectures and one solemn one in the public schools every term.

pletely learned from private reading as from the mouth of any lecturer whatever. What can his lecture consist of, if it aims to teach what it ought, but a chain of well-authenticated events, judiciously selected from the numerous writers on the subject? What can it then be more than an abridgment added to the innumerable ones with which our libraries are already crowded? I know of no difficult propositions which this study contains, to the proof of which the pupil must be led step after step by the slow hand of demonstration; or that require to be elucidated by the conviction of a mechanical experiment. On this subject carefully to read, is completely to understand; it is the exercise of memory, not of reason. But a public lecturer, reading to an audience well instructed in these facts, has a wider and nobler field. It is his province to trace every important event to its political spring; to develope the cause, and thence deduce the consequence. In the course of such disquisitions, the rational faculties of his auditors are employed in weighing the force of his arguments, and their judgments finally convinced by the decisive strength of them. What would be an idle display of either logic or rhetoric, where youths are only to be initiated into the knowledge of facts, becomes before this circle of mature hearers, a necessary exertion of erudition and genius. From such lectures, afterwards collected into a volume, not only the University but the nation itself, nay all other nations might reap their advantage; and receive from this, the benefit they have received from other similar institutions: for though Mr. Gray, in one of the plans lately mentioned, observes, that 'Lectures read in public are generally things of more ostentation than use; yet' (he adds) 'if indeed they should gradually swell into a book, and the author should find reason to hope they might deserve the attention of the public, it is possible they might become of general service; of this

we have already some instances, as Judge Blackstone's Lectures on the Common Law, and the Bishop of Oxford's on Hebrew Poetry.'

But these reflections lead me beyond my purpose, which was only to remove from my deceased friend any imputation which, on this account, might rest on his memory. Certain it is, that notwithstanding his ill health, he constantly intended to read lectures; and I remember the last time he visited me at Aston, in the summer of the year 1770, he expressed much chagrin on this subject, and even declared it to be his stedfast resolution to resign his professorship, if he found himself unable to do real service in it. What I said to dissuade him from this, though I urged, as may be supposed, every argument I could think of, had, I found, so little weight with him, that I am almost persuaded he would very soon have put this intention into execution. But death prevented the trial; the particulars of which it is now my melancholy office to relate.

The gout, which he always believed hereditary in his constitution (for both his parents died of that distemper), had for several years attacked him in a weakly and unfixed manner; and the great temperance which he observed, particularly in regard to his drinking, served, perhaps, to prevent any severe paroxism, but by no means eradicated the constitutional malady. In the latter end of May, 1771, just about the time he wrote the last letter, he removed to London, where he became feverish, and his dejection of spirits increased: the weather being then very sultry, our common friend, Dr. Gisborne*, advised him, for an opener and freer air, to remove from his lodgings in Jermyn-street to Kensington, where he frequently attended him, and where Mr. Gray so far got the

* Physician to his Majesty's household.

better of his disorder, as to be able to return to Cambridge; meaning from thence to set out very soon for Old Park, in hopes that travelling, from which he usually received so much benefit, would complete his cure: but on the 24th of July, while at dinner in the College Hall, he felt a sudden nausea, which obliged him to rise from table and retire to his chamber. This continued to increase, and nothing staying on his stomach, he sent for his friend Dr. Glynn, who finding it to be the gout in that part, thought his case dangerous, and called in Dr. Plumptree, the Physical Professor: they prescribed to him the usual cordials given in that distemper, but without any good effect; for on the 29th he was seized with a strong convulsion fit, which, on the 30th, returned with increased violence, and on the next evening he expired. He was sensible at times almost to the last, and from the first aware of his extreme danger; but expressed no visible concern at the thoughts of his approaching dissolution.

This account I draw up from the letters which Dr. Brown, then on the spot, wrote to me during his short illness; and as I felt strongly at the time what Tacitus has so well expressed on a similar occasion, I may, with propriety, use his words: 'Mihi, præter acerbitatem amici erepti, auget mœstitiam, quod adsidere valetudini, fovere deficientem, satiari vultu, complexu, non contigit*.' I was then on the eastern side of Yorkshire, at a distance from the direct post, and therefore did not receive the melancholy intelligence soon enough to be able to reach Cambridge before his corpse had been carried to the place he had, by will, appointed for its interment. To see the last rites duly performed, therefore, fell to the lot of Dr. Brown; I had only to join him, on his return from the

* Vita Agricolæ, cap. xlv.

funeral, in executing the other trusts which his friendship had authorised us jointly to perform.

The method in which I have arranged the foregoing pages has, I trust, one degree of merit, that it makes the reader so well acquainted with the man himself, as to render it totally unnecessary to conclude the whole with his character. If I am mistaken in this point, I have been a compiler to little purpose; and I chose to be this rather than a biographer, that I might do the more justice to the virtues and genius of my friend. I might have written his life in the common form, perhaps with more reputation to myself; but, surely, not with equal information to the reader; for whose sake I have never related a single circumstance of Mr. Gray's life in my own words, when I could employ *his* for the purpose. Fortunately I had more materials for this use than commonly fall to the lot of an editor; and I certainly have not been sparing in the use of them: whether I have been too lavish, must be left to the decision of the public.

With respect to the Latin Poems, which I have printed in the three first Sections of these Memoirs, I must beg leave to add one word here, though a little out of place. A learned and ingenious person, to whom I communicated them, after they were printed off, was of opinion, that they contain some few expressions not warranted by any good authority; and that there are one or two false quantities to be found in them. I once had an intention to cancel the pages, and correct the passages objected to, according to my friend's criticisms; but, on second thoughts, I deemed it best to let them stand exactly as I found them in the manuscripts. The accurate classical reader will perhaps be best pleased with finding out the faulty passages himself; and his candour will easily make the proper allowances for any little mistakes

in verses, which he will consider never had the author's last hand.

I might here lay down my pen, yet if any reader should still want his character, I will give him one which was published very soon after Mr. Gray's decease*. It appears to be well written; and, as it comes from an anonymous pen, I choose the rather to insert it, as it will, on that account, be less suspected of partiality.

'Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe. He was equally acquainted with the elegant and profound parts of science, and that not superficially but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, both natural† and civil; had read all the

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* It appeared in the London Magazine a month or two after his decease, and was prefaced with an eulogy on his poetical merit, which I did not think necessary to reprint in a work where that merit so very fully speaks for itself.

† I have given, in the beginning of this Section, an account of the great pains which Mr. Gray bestowed on natural history. I have since been favoured with a letter from a gentleman, well skilled in that science, who, after carefully perusing his interleaved Systema Naturæ of Linnæus, gives me this character of it: 'In the class of animals (the Mammalia) he has concentrated (if I may use the expression) what the old writers and the diffuse Buffon have said upon the subject; he has universally adapted the concise language of Linnæus, and has given it an elegance which the Swede had no idea of; but there is little of his own in this class, and it served him only as a common-place; but it is such a common-place that few men but Mr. Gray could form. In the birds and fishes he has most accurately described all that he had an opportunity of examining: but the volume of in-

original historians of England, France, and Italy; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his plan of study; voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusement; and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening *. With such a fund of knowledge, his conversation must have been equally instructing and entertaining; but he was also a good man, a well-bred man, a man of virtue and humanity. There is no character without some speck, some imperfection; and I think the greatest defect in his was an affectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy †, and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science. He also had in some degree that weakness which disgusted Voltaire so much in Mr. Congreve ‡: though

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sects is the most perfect; on the English insects there is certainly nothing so perfect. In regard to the plants, there is little else than the English names and their native soils extracted from the Species Plantarum of Linnæus. I suppose no man was so complete a master of his system; he has selected the distinguishing marks of each animal, &c. with the greatest judgment, and, what no man else probably could have done, he has made the German Latin of Linnæus purely classical.'

* He has disclaimed any skill in this art in the xxxvith letter of the fourth Section, and usually held it in less estimation than I think it deserves, declaring himself to be only charmed with the bolder features of unadorned nature.

† This is rightly put; it was rather an affectation in delicacy and effeminacy than the things themselves; and he chose to put on this appearance chiefly before persons whom he did not wish to please.

‡ I have often thought that Mr. Congreve might

he seemed to value others, chiefly according to the progress they had made in knowledge*; yet he could not bear to be considered himself merely as a man of letters; and though without birth, or fortune, or station, his desire was to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman, who read for his amusement. Perhaps it may be said, What signifies so much knowledge, when it produced so little? Is it worth taking so much pains to leave no memorial, but a few poems? But let it be considered, that Mr. Gray was to others, at least innocently employed; to himself, certainly beneficially. His time passed agreeably; he was every day making some new acquisition in science;

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very well be vindicated on this head. It seldom happens that the vanity of authorship continues to the end of man's days, it usually soon leaves him where it found him; and if he has not something better to build his self-approbation upon than that of being a popular writer, he generally finds himself ill at ease, if respected only on that account. Mr. Congreve was much advanced in years when the young French poet paid him this visit; and, though a man of the world, he might now feel that indifference to literary fame which Mr. Gray, who always led a more retired and philosophic life, certainly felt much earlier. Both of them therefore might reasonably, at times, express some disgust, if their quiet was intruded upon by persons who thought they flattered them by such intrusion.

* It was not on account of their knowledge that he valued mankind. He contemned indeed all pretenders to literature, but he did not select his friends from the literary class, merely because they were literate. To be his friend it was always either necessary that a man should have something better than an improved understanding, or at least that Mr. Gray should believe he had.

his mind was enlarged, his heart softened, his virtue strengthened; the world and mankind were shown to him without a mask; and he was taught to consider every thing as trifling, and unworthy of the attention of a wise man, except the pursuit of knowledge, and the practice of virtue, in that state wherein God hath placed us.'

END OF THE FIFTH SECTION.

IMITATIONS, VARIATIONS,

AND

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the foregoing edition the text of all those pieces, which the author published in his lifetime, is given exactly as he left it in the London and Glasgow editions; and the few added pieces are printed verbatim from his corrected manuscripts. I have also inserted all his explanatory notes at the bottom of their respective pages; but those which only pointed out imitative expressions have been reserved for these concluding pages, because many of them appeared to me not very material, and therefore would have crowded the text as unnecessarily as my own annotations.

NOTES, &c.

ODE I.

THE original manuscript title which Mr. Gray gave to this ode was NOONTIDE; probably he then meant to write two more, descriptive of Morning and Evening. His unfinished ode (vide infra, p. 499), opens with a fine description of the former: and his Elegy with as beautiful a picture of the latter, which perhaps he might, at that time, have meditated upon for the exordium of an ode; but this is only conjecture. It may, however, be remarked, that these three capital descriptions abound with ideas which affect the ear more than the eye, and therefore go beyond the powers of picturesque imitation.

1. O'er-canopies the glade.—Stanza 2. l. 4.

IMITATION.

——————— a bank
O'er-canopied with luscious woodbine. G.
Shaks. Mids. Night's Dream.

2. How low, how little are the Proud;
How indigent the Great.—Stanza 2. l. 9 and 10.

VARIATION.

How low, how indigent the Proud;
How little are the Great.

Thus it stood in Dodsley's Miscellany, where it was first published. The author corrected it on account of the point of *little* and *great*. It certainly had too much the appearance of a concetto, though it expressed his meaning better than the present reading.

3. And float amid the liquid noon.—Stanza 3. l. 7.

IMITATION.

Nare per æstatem liquidam.
Virgil. Georg. lib. iv. G.

4. Quick-glancing to the sun.—Stanza 3. l. 10.

IMITATION.

——— sporting with quick glance,
Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold.
Milton's Par. Lost, book vii. G.

5. To Contemplation's sober eye.—Stanza 4. l. 1.

IMITATION.

While insects from the threshold preach, &c.
M. Green in the Grotto.
Dodsley's Misc. vol. v. p. 161. G.

ODE II.

1. This little piece, in which comic humour is so happily blended with lyrical fancy, was written, in point of time, some years later than the first, third, and fourth odes; [See Memoirs, Sect. 4. Let. 6.] but as the author had printed it here in his own edition, I have not changed it. Mr. Walpole, since the death of Mr. Gray, has placed the china vase in question on a pedestal at Straw-

berry-Hill, with the first four lines of the ode for its inscription.

'Twas on *this* vase's lofty side,' &c.

2. Two angel forms were seen to glide.

Stanza 3. l. 2.

VARIATION.

Two *beauteous* forms.

First edition in Dodsley's Misc.

ODE III.

1. This was the first English production of Mr. Gray which appeared in print. It was published in folio, by Dodsley, in 1747; about the same time, at Mr. Walpole's request, Mr. Gray sat for his picture to Echart, in which, on a paper which he held in his hand, Mr. Walpole wrote the title of this ode, and to intimate his own high and just opinion of it, as a first production, added this line of Lucan, by way of motto:

Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre.

Phars. lib. x. l. 296.

2. And redolent of joy and youth.—Stanza 2. l. 9.

IMITATION.

And bees their honey redolent of spring.

Dryden's Fable on the Pythag. System. G.

3. And hard unkindness' alter'd eye.—Stanza 8. l. 6.

The elision here is ungraceful, and hurts this otherwise beautiful line: one of the same kind in the second line of the first ode makes the same blemish; but I think they are the only two to be

found in this correct writer; and I mention them here, that succeeding poets may not look upon them as authorities. The judicious reader will not suppose that I would condemn all elisions of the genitive case, by this stricture on those which are terminated by rough consonants. Many there are which the ear readily admits, and which use has made familiar to it.

4. And moody Madness laughing wild.
Stanza 8. l. 9.

IMITATION.

—— Madness laughing in her ireful mood.
Dryden's Palamon and Arcite. G.

ODE IV.

1. This ode was first published, with the three foregoing, in Dodsley's Miscellany, under the title of an Hymn to Adversity, which title is here dropped for the sake of uniformity in the page. It is unquestionably as truly lyrical as any of his other odes.

2. Exact my own defects to scan.—Stanza 6. l. 7.

The many hard consonants which occur in this line hurt the ear; Mr. Gray perceived it himself, but did not alter it, as the words themselves were those which best conveyed his idea, and therefore he did not choose to sacrifice sense to sound.

HAD Mr. Gray completed the fine lyrical fragment which I have inserted in the fourth Section of the Memoirs, I should have introduced it into the text of his Poems, as the fifth and last of his monostrophic odes. In order to fulfil the promise which I there made to my reader, I shall now reprint the piece with my own additions to it. I have already made my apology for the attempt; and therefore shall only add, that although (as is usually done on such occasions) I print my supplemental lines in the italic character, yet I am well aware that their inferiority would but too easily distinguish them without any typographical assistance.

ODE

ON

THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE.

Now the golden Morn aloft
Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermil cheek, and whisper soft
She wooes the tardy Spring:
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground;
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance,
The birds his presence greet:

But chief, the sky-lark warbles high
His trembling thrilling ecstacy;
And, lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Rise, my soul! on wings of fire,
Rise the rapt'rous choir among;
Hark! 'tis Nature strikes the lyre,
And leads the general song:
Warm let the lyric transport flow,
Warm, as the ray that bids it glow;
And animates the vernal grove
With health, with harmony, and love.

Yesterday the sullen year
Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
Mute was the music of the air,
The herd stood drooping by:
Their raptures now that wildly flow,
No yesterday, nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy descries
With forward, and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past Misfortune's brow
Soft Reflection's hand can trace;
And o'er the cheek of Sorrow throw
A melancholy grace:
While Hope prolongs our happier hour,
Or deepest shades, that dimly lower
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still, where rosy Pleasure leads,
See a kindred Grief pursue;
Behind the steps that Misery treads
Approaching Comfort view:
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe;
And blended form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of life.

See the wretch, that long has tost
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe, and walk again:
The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.

Humble Quiet builds her cell,
Near the source whence Pleasure flows;
She eyes the clear * crystalline well,
And tastes it as it goes.
While far below the *madding* crowd
Rush headlong to the dangerous flood,
Where broad and turbulent it sweeps,
And perish in the boundless deeps.

Mark where Indolence, and Pride,
Sooth'd by Flattery's tinkling sound,
Go, softly rolling, side by side,
Their dull, but daily round:
To these, if Hebe's self should bring
The purest cup from Pleasure's spring,
Say, can they taste the flavour high
Of sober, simple, genuine Joy?

Mark Ambition's march sublime
Up to Power's meridian height;
While pale-eyed Envy sees him climb,
And sickens at the sight.
Phantoms of Danger, Death, and Dread,
Float hourly round Ambition's head;
While Spleen, within his rival's breast,
Sits brooding on her scorpion nest.

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* So Milton accents the word:

On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned.

P. L. Book vi. v. 772.

Happier he, the Peasant, far,
From the pangs of Passion free,
That breathes the keen yet wholesome air
Of rugged Penury.
He, when his morning task is done,
Can slumber in the noontide sun;
And hie him home, at evening's close,
To sweet repast, and calm repose.

He, unconscious whence the bliss,
Feels, and owns in carols rude,
That all the circling joys are his,
Of dear Vicissitude.
From toil he wins his spirits light,
From busy day, the peaceful night;
Rich, from the very want of wealth,
In Heaven's best treasures, Peace and Health.

I have heard Mr. Gray say, that M. Gresset's 'Epitre a ma Sœur' (see his works in the Amsterdam edition, 1748, p. 180) gave him the first idea of this ode; and whoever compares it with the French poem, will find some slight traits of resemblance, but chiefly in our author's seventh stanza.

We come now to Mr. Gray's Pindaric odes. And I think myself happy, through the favour of Mr. How (whose acquaintance with Count Algarotti is mentioned in the Memoirs, note on Let. 44. Sect. 4.), to be permitted to preface my annotations on them with a letter which that celebrated foreigner wrote to him on their subject. It does honour at once to the writer, the poet, and their common friend.

AL SIGNOR GUGLIELMO TAYLOR HOW.

Pisa, Dicem. 26, 1762.

DEI moltissimi obblighi, che io ho alla tanta sua gentilezza, non è certo il minore quello dello avermi ella novellamente introdotto in uno dè più riposti laureti del Parnaso Inglese, avendomi fatto parte di alcune liriche poesie del Signor Gray. Io non saprei quale oda non dirò del celebre Rousseau, ma del Guidi, del Lazzarini, ed anche del Chiabrera, che scrissèro in una lingua più poetica che la Francese non è, paragonar si potesse all' Oda sopra l' Armonia, o a quella contro ad Odoardo Primo del loro novello Pindaro, ed Alceo.

La poesia dei popoli settentrionali pare a me, che, generalmènte parlando, consista più di pensieri, che d' immagini, si compiaccia delle riflessioni equalmente che dei sentimenti, non sia così particolareggiata, e pittoresca come è la nostra. Virgilio a cagione d' esempio rapprèsentando Didone quando esce alla caccia fa una tal dèscrizione del suo vestimento, che tutti i ritrattisti, leggendo quel passo, la vestirebbono a un modo:

Tandem progreditur, magnâ stipante catervâ,
Sidoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo:
Cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum,
Aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem.

Non così il Miltono quando descrive la nuda bellezza di Eva;

Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture, dignity and love.

Con quella parole generali, e astratte idee di grazia, cielo, amore, e maestà non pare a lei che ognuno si formi in mente una Eva a posta sua? Talchè dietro a quei versi *Rubens* l' avrèbbe di-

pinta come una grossa Bàlia Fiamminga, *Raffaello* come la Venere dâ Medici, quale appunto, il Miltono l' avrèbbe dovuta descrivere.

Envy itself is dumb, in wonder lost,
And factions strive who shall applaud him most.

Dice un loro famoso poeta se ben mi ricordo. Ed ecco come un poeta Italiano, quel medesimo Lazzarini che ho nominato da principio, ha pittorescamènte attegiato la medesima invidia.

Bello il veder dall' una parte vinta
L' Invidia, e cinta
Di serpi contro a lei sola rivolte,
Meditar molte
Menzogne in vano, e poi restarle in gola
L' empia parola.

Cotesta maggior dose di pittura dirò così ch' entra nella nostra poesia è forse uno effetto anch' essa della dilicatezza, ed irritabilita dèlla fibra delle nazioni poste sotto climi caldi. Onde sentono, ed immaginano più vivamente dèlle nazioni settentrionali, più atte per avventura, che noi non siamo, a pensare con pazienza, ad analizzare, a penetrare sino al fondo delle cose *. In fatti, se fu dato alla Grecia di produrre un Omero che è il principe dè poeti, fu dato all' Inghilterra il produrre un Neutono padre e sovrano della filosofica famiglia.

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* All this comparative criticism seems rather ingenious than true. The count might have found, in another part of the Paradise Lost, a description of this very Eve more particularised and picturesque; and two allegorical figures of Sin and Death, full as strongly featured as the Envy of Lazzarini. Spenser would, in almost every page of his Fairy Queen, have produced him pictures as boldly imagined and peculiarly marked as are to be met with in the writings of any more southern poet.

Comunque sia di ciò l' una di queste poesie chiamare si potrebbe logica, grafica l' altra. In questo secondo genere io porrei la poesia del Signor Gray, il quale benchè nato verso il Polo, uguaglia i più caldi poeti, che sorsero più vicini al sole. Il *verbum ardens* di Cicerone, *words that burn*, che egli nella prima oda adatta à Dryden, bene si può appropriare, per la vivacità della espressione, a lui medèsimo: e cosi ancora quei, *thoughts that breathe;* del che egli è cortese all' istesso poeta.

From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.

Quel bera dei fiori vita e fragranza dalle acque di Elicona, spira talè soavita, che uno crede respirar veramente la dolce aria dello Elicona medesimo. Vivissima è la pittura del pargoletto Shakspeare, che tende le tenerelle mani e sorride alla natura che gli svela il reverendo suo sembiante, e dipoi gli fa dono di quelle auree chiavi, che hanno virtù di schiudere le porte del riso, e la sacra fonte dèl simpatico pianto. Non può essere più poetica la ragione ch' egli fabbrica della cecità del Miltono, il quale; oltrepassati i fiammanti confine dello spazio e del tempo, ebbe ardire di fissare lo sguardo colà dove gli angioli stessi paventano di rimirare; e gli occhi suoi affuocati in quel pelago di lucè si chiusero tosto in una notte sempiterna. Con qual bravura non ha egli imitato la grandiosa immagine di Pindaro nella prima delle Pitiche, quando dipinge il re degli augelli, l' aquila ministra del fulmine di Giove vinta anch' essa dalla forza dell' armonia? E non si vedon eglino in quel bel verso,

Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay——

espressi quei due di Tibullo?

Illam quidquid agat, quoquo vestigia flectat,
Componit furtim, subsequiturque decor.

Pieno degli spiriti dè più nobili antichi autori, non mette già egli il piede nelle loro pedate; ma francamente cammina col garbo, e con la disinvoltura di quelli. Superiore di gran lunga al concettoso Cowley, il quale nella lirica avea tenuto sinora il campo, ben egli dovea vendicar la causa della poesia contro alla ferità di quell' Odoardo, che, soggiogata la Wallia, vi spense il gentil seme dei poeti, i quali animando i loro compatrioti a belle imprese, erano i successori, si può dire, degli antichi Druidi, e gli antecessori del medesimo Gray. Con qual forza con quale ardore nol fa egli acceso della sacra fiamma dell'estro e della libertà? Troppo lungo io sarei se esprimer le volessi il piacere di che mi è stata cagione la varietà grandissima d'immagini ch' egli ha saputo fare entrare nel vaticinio che contro alla razza di Odoardo fulmina il poeta Wallese. La dirò bene all' orecchio che quel vaticinio mi sembra di gran lunga superiore al vaticinio di Nereo sopra lo eccidio di Troia. Dico all' orecchio, perchè non vorrei avere contro di me la plebe dè letterati. Troppo ella si scandalizzerebbe all' udire che a una fattura di dieciotto secoli fa se ne voglia preferire una de' nostri giorni, che non ha avuto il tempo di far la patina che hanno fatto le cose dei Greci e dei Latini. *Æolio carmine nobilis* il Signor Gray si può chiamare a ragione *Britannæ fidicen lyræ:* ed io mi rallegro sommamente con esso lei, che la patria sua vanti presentemente, e in uno de' suoi amici, un poeta, che non la cede a niuno di quegli antichi,

Che le Muse lattar più ch' altri mai.

ODE V.

1. This highly-finished Ode, which Mr. Gray entitled the 'Progress of Poesy,' describes its power and influence as well as progress, which his explanatory notes at the bottom of the page point out, and this with all the accuracy of metaphysical precision, disguised under the appearance of Pindaric digression. On the first line of it he gave, in his edition, the following note: 'Pindar styles his own poetry, with its musical accompaniments,

'Αιολὴις μολπὴ, Αἰόλιδες χορδαὶ, Αἰολίδων πνοαὶ ἀυλῶν:

'Æolian song, Æolian strings, the breath of the Æolian flute.'

It will seem strange to the learned reader, that he thought such explanation necessary, and he will be apt to look on it as the mere parade of Greek quotation; but his reason for it was, that the Critical Reviewers had mistaken his meaning (see note on let. 26, sect. 4, of the Memoirs), and supposed the Ode addressed to the Harp of Æolus; which they said 'was altogether uncertain and irregular, and therefore must be very ill adapted to the *dance*.' See Epode i. l. 1. This ridiculous blunder, which he did not think proper openly to advert on, led him to produce his Greek quotations, that they might chew on them at their leisure; but he would hardly have done this, had not the reception his ode met with made him abate, not only of respect to his critics, but to his readers in general. See his own note.

2. Awake, Æolian lyre, awake.—Stanza 1. l. 1.

IMITATION.

Awake, my glory: awake, lute and harp.
David's Ps. G.

VARIATION.

In his manuscript it originally stood,
Awake, my lyre: my glory, wake.

And it would have been lucky for the above-mentioned critics, if it had been thus printed.

3. Perching on the sceptred hand.—Antist. 1. l. 8.

This description of the Bird of Jupiter, Mr. Gray, in his own edition, modestly calls, 'a weak imitation of some incomparable lines in the first Pythian of Pindar;' but if they are compared with Mr. Gilbert West's translation of the above lines (though far from a bad one) their superior energy to his version will appear very conspicuous.

Perch'd on the sceptre of th' Olympian King,
The thrilling darts of harmony he feels;
And indolently hangs his rapid wing,
While gentle sleep his closing eyelid seals,
And o'er his heaving limbs in loose array,
To ev'ry balmy gale the ruffling feathers play.

Here, if we except the second line, we find no imagery or expression of the lyrical cast. The rest are loaded with unnecessary epithets, and would better suit the tamer tones of elegy.
West's Pindar, vol. i. p. 85.

4. Glance their many-twinkling feet.—Ep. 1. l. 11.

IMITATION.

Μαρμαρυγὰς ϑῄεῖτο ποδῶν· ϑαύμαζε δὲ ϑυμῷ.
Homer Od. Θ, G.

5. Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare.

This and the five flowing lines which follow are sweetly introduced by the short and unequal measures that precede them: the whole stanza is indeed a master-piece of rhythm, and charms the ear by its well-varied cadence, as much as the imagery which it contains ravishes the fancy. 'There is' (says our author, in one of his manuscript papers) 'a *tout ensemble* of sound, as well as of sense, in poetical composition, always necessary to its perfection. What is gone before still dwells upon the ear, and insensibly harmonizes with the present line, as in that succession of fleeting notes which is called Melody.' Nothing can better exemplify the truth of this fine observation than his own poetry.

6. The bloom of young desire and purple light of love.—Ep. i. l. 17.

IMITATION.

Λάμπει δ' ἐπὶ πορφυρέῃσι
Παρείῃσι φῶς ἔρωτος.
Phrynichus apud Athenæum. G.

7. Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts of war.—Stanza 2. l. 11 and 12.

IMITATION.

Or seen the morning's well-appointed star
Come marching up the eastern hills afar.
Cowley. G.

8. In climes beyond the solar road.—Antist. ii. l. 1.

IMITATION.

Extra anni solisque vias—— Virgil.

Tutta lontana dal camin del sole.

Petrarch Canzon ii. G.

9. Far from the sun and summer-gale.

Stanza 3. l. 1.

An ingenious person, who sent Mr. Gray his remarks anonymously on this and the following Ode, soon after they were published, gives this stanza and the following a very just and well expressed eulogy: 'A poet is perhaps never more conciliating than when he praises favourite predecessors in his art. Milton is not more the pride than Shakspeare the love of their country: it is, therefore, equally judicious to diffuse a tenderness and a grace through the praise of Shakspeare, as to extol in a strain more elevated and sonorous the boundless soarings of Milton's epic imagination.' The critic has here well noted the beauty of contrast which results from the two descriptions; yet it is further to be observed, to the honour of our poet's judgment, that the tenderness and grace in the former does not prevent it from strongly characterizing the three capital perfections of Shakspeare's genius; and when he describes his power of exciting terror (a species of the sublime) he ceases to be diffuse, and becomes, as he ought to be, concise and energetical.

10. He pass'd the flaming bounds of place and time.—Antist. iii. l. 4.

IMITATION.

—— Flammantia mænia mundi.—Lucretius. G.

11. The living throne, the sapphire-blaze.

Antist. iii. l. 5.

IMITATION.

For the spirit of the living creature was in the

wheels, and above the firmament that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone—this was the appearance of the glory of the Lord.

Ezekiel i. 20, 26, 28. G.

12. Closed his eyes in endless night.

Antist. iii. l. 8.

IMITATION.

Ὀφθαλμῶν μὲν ἄμερσε· δίδου δ' ἡδεῖαν ἀοιδήν.

Homer Od. G.

This has been condemned as a false thought, and more worthy of an Italian poet than of Mr. Gray. Count Algarotti, we have found in his letter to Mr. How, praises it highly; but as he was an Italian critic, his judgment, in this point, will not, perhaps, by many, be thought to overbalance the objection. The truth is, that this fiction of the cause of Milton's blindness is not beyond the bounds of poetical credibility, any more than the fiction which precedes it concerning the birth of Shakspeare; and therefore would be equally admissible, had it not the peculiar misfortune to encounter a fact too well known: on this account the judgment revolts against it. Milton himself has told us, in a strain of heart-felt exultation (see his Sonnet to Cyriac Skynner), that he lost his eye-sight

——————— overply'd
In Liberty's Defence, *his* noble task;
Whereof all Europe rings from side to side;

And, when we know this to have been the true cause, we cannot admit a fictitious one, however sublimely conceived, or happily expressed. If, therefore, so lofty and unrivalled a description will not atone for this acknowledged defect, in relation to matter of fact, all that the impartial

critic can do is to point out the reason, and to apologize for the poet, who was necessitated by his subject to consider Milton only in his poetical capacity.

Since the above note was published, Mr. Brand, of East-Dereham, in Norfolk, has favoured me with a letter, in which he informs me of a very similar hyperbole extant in a MS. Commentary upon Plato's Phædon, written by Hermias, a christian philosopher, of the second century, and which is printed in Bayle's Dictionary (Art. Achilles). It contains the following anecdote of Homer:—'That keeping some sheep near the tomb of Achilles, he obtained, by his offerings and supplications, a sight of that hero; who appeared to him surrounded with so much glory that Homer could not bear the splendor of it, and that he was not only dazzled, but blinded by the sight.' The ingenious gentleman makes no doubt but Mr. Gray took his thought from this passage, and applauds him for the manner in which he has improved upon it: he also thinks in general, 'that a deviation from historical truth, though it may cast a shade over the middling beauties of poetry, produces no bad effect where the magnificence and brilliancy of the images entirely fill the imagination;' and with regard to this passage in particular, he intimates, 'that as the cause of Milton's blindness is not so well known as the thing itself, the licence of poetical invention may allow him to assign a cause different from the real fact.' However this may be, the very exact resemblance, which the two thoughts bear to one another, will, I hope, vindicate Mr. Gray's from being a modern concetto in the taste of the Italian school, as it has been deemed to be by some critics. But this resemblance will do more; (and it is on this account chiefly that I produce, and thank the gentleman for communicating it) it will prove the extreme uncertainty of deciding upon poetical imi-

tations; for I am fully persuaded that Mr. Gray had never seen, or at least attended to, this Greek fragment. How scrupulous he was in borrowing even an epithet from another poet, many of his notes on this very Ode fully prove. And as to the passage in question, he would certainly have cited it, for the sake of vindicating his own taste by classical authority, especially when the thought had been so much controverted.

13. With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.—Antist. iii. l. 12.

IMITATION.

Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?—Job.

This verse, and the foregoing, are meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhymes. G.

14. Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn. Ep. iii. l. 4.

IMITATION.

Words that weep, and tears that speak.
Cowley. G.

15. That the Theban eagle bear.—Ep. iii. l. 9.

Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον.—Olymp. ii.

Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamour in vain below, while it pursues its flight, regardless of their noise. G.

16. The critic, above quoted, concludes his remarks on this ode, which he had written after his observations on the Bard, in a manner which accounts, in my opinion, for the superior pleasure that it has given to him, and also to the generality of readers. 'I quit,' says he, 'this ode with the strongest conviction of its abundant

merit; though I took it up (for this last attentive perusal), persuaded that it was not a little inferior to the other. They are not the treasures of imagination only that have so copiously enriched it: it speaks, but surely less feelingly than the Bard (still my favourite), to the heart. Can we in truth be equally interested for the fabulous exploded gods of other nations (celebrated in the first half of this ode), as by the story of our own Edwards and Henrys, or allusions to it? Can a description, the most perfect language ever attained to, of tyranny expelling the muses from Parnassus, seize the mind equally with the horrors of Berkley Castle, with the apostrophe to the tower?

'And spare the meek usurper's holy head!

'I do not mean, however, wholly to decry fabulous subjects or allusions, nor more than to suggest the preference due to historical ones, where happily the poet's fertile imagination supplies him with a plentiful choice of both kinds, and he finds himself capable of treating both, according to their respective natures, with equal advantage.'

17. It will not surely be improper at the conclusion of this ode, so peculiarly admirable for the musical flow of its numbers, to mention one circumstance relative to English lyric poetry in general, and much to its honour, which has lately been communicated to me by an ingenious friend. It is this:—'That it can fully, at least when in the hands of such a master, support its harmony without the assistance of music. For there is great reason to believe, that in the Greek ode, of which we are taught to think so highly, the power of numbers was little perceived without the effectual aid of a musical accompaniment. And we have in proof of this supposition the express testimonies of Cicero and Quintilian. The first,

in his *Orator* (a finished performance, and of which he speaks himself in the highest terms, ep. fam. vi. 18.), makes the following observation: 'Sed in versibus res est apertior: quamquam etiam à modis quibusdam, cantu remoto, soluta esse videatur oratio, maximèque id in optimo quoque eorum poëtarum, qui Λυρικοὶ à Græcis nominantur: quos cùm cantu spoliaveris, nuda pænè remanet oratio.'—*Orator*. No. 183.—He gives a farther instance from the poets of his own country, which I do not here cite as any additional proof of the point in question, but as the clearest illustration of his meaning in the foregoing quotation. 'Quorum similia sunt quædam etiam apud nostros: velut illa in Thyeste,

Quemnam te esse dicam? qui tardâ in senectute:

Et quæ sequuntur: quæ, nisi cùm tibicen accessit, orationi sunt solutæ simillima.'—*Ibid.*—The second testimony, that of Quintilian, is also full to our present purpose. 'Poëtas certè legendos Oratori futuro concesserint: num igitur hi sine Musice? at si quis tam cæcus animi est, ut de aliis dubitet; illos certè, qui carmina ad lyram composuerunt.'—Quintilianus, lib. 1. cap. 17.—Here we see, that, whatever might be the case with some other kinds of poetry, in the ode the want of an accompanying lyre could not be dispensed with.

'Thus then, if we rely on these classical authorities, stood the Greek ode; claiming, in the exhibition of a beauty so essential to its perfection, the kind assistance of an inferior art: while the lyrics of Mr. Gray, with the richness of imagery and the glow of expression, breathe also the various modulations of an intrinsic and independent melody.

'For this singular advantage, so little known or considered, we are certainly indebted to rhyme;

and, whatever opinion may be formed of its use in other kinds of poetry, we may conclude from hence that it is a necessary support to the harmony of our ode.'

ODE VI.

1. I promised the reader, in the Memoirs (see a note between the 20th and 21st Letter, Sect. 4.), to give him, in this place, the original argument of this capital ode, as its author had set it down on one of the pages of his common-place book. It is as follows: 'The army of Edward I. as they march through a deep valley, are suddenly stopped by the appearance of a venerable figure seated on the summit of an inaccessible rock, who, with a voice more than human, reproaches the king with all the misery and desolation which he had brought on his country; foretells the misfortunes of the Norman race, and with prophetic spirit declares, that all his cruelty shall never extinguish the noble ardour of poetic genius in this island; and that men shall never be wanting to celebrate true virtue and valour in immortal strains, to expose vice and infamous pleasure, and boldly censure tyranny and oppression. His song ended, he precipitates himself from the mountain, and is swallowed up by the river that rolls at its foot.' Fine as the conclusion of this ode is at present, I think it would have been still finer, if he could have executed it according to this plan; but unhappily for his purpose, instances of English poets were wanting. Spenser had that enchanting flow of verse which was peculiarly calculated *to celebrate Virtue and*

Valour; but he chose to celebrate them, not literally, but in allegory. Shakspeare, who had talents for every thing, was undoubtedly capable *of exposing Vice and infamous Pleasure;* and the drama was a proper vehicle for his satire: but we do not ever find that he professedly made this his object; nay, we know that, in one inimitable character, he has so contrived as to make vices of the worst kind, such as cowardice, drunkenness, dishonesty, and lewdness, not only laughable, but almost amiable; for with all these sins on his head, who can help liking Falstaff? Milton, of all our great poets, was the only one *who boldly censured Tyranny and Oppression:* but he chose to deliver this censure, not in poetry, but in prose. Dryden was a mere court parasite to the most infamous of all courts. Pope, with all his laudable detestation of corruption and bribery, was a Tory; and Addison, though a Whig and a fine writer, was unluckily not enough of a poet for his purpose. On these considerations Mr. Gray was necessitated to change his plan towards the conclusion: hence we perceive, that in the last epode he praises Spenser only *for his allegory,* Shakspeare *for his powers of moving the passions,* and Milton *for his epic excellence.* I remember the ode lay unfinished by him for a year or two on this very account; and I hardly believe that it would ever have had his last hand but for the circumstance of his hearing Parry play on the Welch harp at a concert at Cambridge (see Letter xxv. Sect. iv.), which he often declared inspired him with the conclusion.

2. Mr. Smith, the musical composer and worthy pupil of Handel, had once an idea of setting this ode, and of having it performed by way of serenata or oratorio. A common friend of his and Mr. Gray's interested himself much in this design, and drew out a clear analysis of the ode,

that Mr. Smith might more perfectly understand the poet's meaning. He conversed also with Mr. Gray on the subject, who gave him an idea for the overture, and marked also some passages in the ode in order to ascertain which should be recitative, which air, what kind of air, and how accompanied. The design was, however, not executed; and therefore I shall only (in order to give the reader a taste of Mr. Gray's musical feelings) insert in this place what his sentiments were concerning the overture. 'It should be so contrived as to be a proper introduction to the ode; it might consist of two movements, the first descriptive of the horror and confusion of battle, the last a march grave and majestic, but expressing the exultation and insolent security of conquest. This movement should be composed entirely of wind instruments, except the kettle-drum heard at intervals. The *da capo* of it must be suddenly broke in upon, and put to silence by the clang of the harp in a tumultuous rapid movement, joined with the voice, all at once, and not ushered in by any symphony. The harmony may be strengthened by any other stringed instrument; but the harp should every where prevail, and form the continued running accompaniment, submitting itself to nothing but the voice.'

3. Ruin seize thee, ruthless King.—Strophe 1. l. 1.

On this noble exordium, the anonymous critic before-mentioned thus eloquently expresses his admiration: 'This abrupt execration plunges the reader into that sudden fearful perplexity which is designed to predominate through the whole. The irresistible violence of the prophet's passions bears him away, who, as he is unprepared by a formal ushering in of the speaker, is unfortified against the impressions of his poetical phrensy, and overpowered by them, as sudden

thunders strike the deepest.' All readers of taste, I fancy, have felt this effect from the passage; they will be well pleased, however, to see their own feelings so well expressed as they are in this note.

4. They mock the air with idle state.

Strophe 1. l. 4.

IMITATION.

Mocking the air with colours idly spread.

Shaks. King John. G.

5. Such were the sounds, that o'er the crested pride.

Strophe 1. l. 9.

IMITATION.

The crested adder's pride.

Dryden's Indian Queen. G.

6. Loose his beard, &c.—Antist. i. l. 5.

The image was taken from a well-known picture of Raphael, representing the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel: there are two of these paintings, both believed to be originals, one at Florence, the other in the Duke of Orleans's collection at Paris. G.

Mr. Gray never saw the large Cartoon, done by the same divine hand, in the possession of the Duke of Montagu, at his seat at Boughton, in Northamptonshire, else I am persuaded he would have mentioned it in this note. The two finished pictures abroad (which I believe are closet-pieces) can hardly have so much spirit in them as this wonderful drawing; it gave me the sublimest idea I ever received from painting. Moses breaking the tables of the law, by Parmegiano, was a figure which Mr. Gray used to say came still nearer to his meaning than the picture of Raphael.

7. Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart.
Ep. i. l. 12 and 13.

IMITATION.

As dear to me as are the ruddy drops,
That visit my sad heart.
Shaks. Julius Cæsar. G.

8. No more I weep, &c.—Ep. i. l. 15.

Here, says the anonymous critic, a vision of triumphant revenge is judiciously made to ensue, after the pathetic lamentation which precedes it. Breaks—double rhymes—an appropriated cadence—and an exalted ferocity of language forcibly picture to us the uncontrollable tumultuous workings of the prophet's stimulated bosom.

9. Weave the warp, &c.—Strophe 2. l. 1.

Can there be an image more just, apposite, and nobly imagined than this tremendous tragical winding-sheet? In the rest of this stanza the wildness of thought, expression, and cadence are admirably adapted to the character and situation of the speaker, and of the bloody spectres, his assistants. It is not indeed peculiar to it alone, but a beauty that runs throughout the whole composition, that the historical events are briefly sketched out by a few striking circumstances, in which the poet's office of rather exciting and directing, than satisfying the reader's imagination, is perfectly observed. Such abrupt hints, resembling the several fragments of a vast ruin, suffer not the mind to be raised to the utmost pitch, by one image of horror, but that instantaneously a second and a third are presented to it, and the affection is still uniformly supported.
Anon. Critic.

10. Fair laughs the morn, &c.

It is always entertaining, and sometimes useful, to be informed how a writer frequently improves on his original thoughts; on this account I have occasionally set down the few variations which Mr. Gray made in his lyrical compositions. The six lines before us convey, perhaps, the most beautiful piece of imagery in the whole ode, and were a wonderful improvement on those which he first wrote; which, though they would appear fine in an inferior poet, are infinitely below those which supplanted them. I find them in one of his corrected manuscripts as follow.

VARIATION.

Mirrors of Saxon truth and loyalty,
Your helpless old expiring master view!
They hear not: scarce Religion dares supply
Her mutter'd requiems, and her holy dew.
Yet thou, proud boy, from Pomfret's walls shall send
A sigh, and envy oft thy happy grandsire's end.

11. Fill high the sparkling bowl.

Epode ii. l. 1. &c.

This stanza (as an ingenious friend remarks) has exceeding merit. It breathes in a lesser compass, what the ode breathes at large, the high spirit of lyric enthusiasm. The transitions are sudden and impetuous; the language full of fire and force; and the imagery carried, without impropriety, to the most daring height. The manner of Richard's death by famine exhibits such beauties of personification, as only the richest and most vivid imagination could supply. From thence we are hurried, with the wildest rapidity, into the midst of battle; and the epithet *kindred* places at once before our eyes all the peculiar horrors of civil war. Imme-

diately, by a transition most striking and unexpected, the poet falls into a tender and pathetic address; which, from the sentiments, and also from the numbers, has all the melancholy flow, and breathes all the plaintive softness, of elegy. Again the scene changes; again the Bard rises into an allegorical description of carnage, to which the metre is admirably adapted: and the concluding sentence of personal punishment on Edward is denounced with a solemnity, that chills and terrifies.

12. No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
All hail, ye genuine Kings, Britannia's Issue, hail!—Strophe 3. l. 13 and 14.

VARIATION. MS.

From Cambria's thousand hills a thousand strains
Triumphant tell aloud, another Arthur reigns.

13. Girt with many a Baron bold,
Sublime their starry fronts they rear.
Ant. iii. l. 1, 2.

VARIATION. MS.

Youthful Knights, and Barons bold,
With dazzling helm, and horrent spear.

14. Fierce War, and faithful Love.—Ep. iii. l. 2.

IMITATION.

Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.
Spenser's Proëme to the Fairy Queen. G.

15. I cannot quit this and the preceding ode without saying a word or two of my own concerning the obscurity which has been imputed to them, and the preference which, in consequence, has been given to his Elegy. It seems as if the per-

sons who hold this opinion suppose that every species of poetry ought to be equally clear and intelligible: than which position nothing can be more repugnant to the several specific natures of composition, and to the practice of ancient art. Not to take Pindar and his Odes for an example (though what I am here defending were written professedly in imitation of him), I would ask, Are all the writings of Horace, his Epistles, Satires, and Odes equally perspicuous? Amongst his Odes, separately considered, are there not remarkable differences of this very kind? Is the spirit and meaning of that which begins, 'Descende cœlo, et dic, age, tibiâ,' Ode 4. lib. 3. so readily comprehended as 'Persicos odi, puer, apparatus?' Ode 38. l. 1. And is the latter a finer piece of lyrical composition on that account? Is 'Integer vitæ, scelerisq; purus,' Ode 22. l. 1. superior to 'Pindarum quisquis studet æmulari,' Ode 2. l. 4. because it may be understood at the first reading, and the latter not without much study and reflection? Now, between these odes, thus compared, there is surely equal difference, in point of perspicuity, as between the Progress of Poesy, and the Prospect of Eton; the Ode on the Spring, and the Bard. But, say these objectors, 'The end of poetry is universally to please. Obscurity, by taking off from our pleasure, destroys that end.' I will grant that, if the obscurity be great, constant, and unsurmountable, this is certainly true; but if it be only found in particular passages, proceeding from the nature of the subject and the very genius of the composition, it does not rob us of our pleasure, but superadds a new one which arises from conquering a difficulty; and the pleasure which accrues from a difficult passage when well understood, provided the passage itself be a fine one, is always more permanent than that which we discover at the first glance. The lyric Muse, like other fine

ladies, requires to be courted, and retains her admirers the longer for not having yielded too readily to their solicitations. This argument ending as it does, in a sort of simile, will, I am persuaded, not only have its force with the intelligent readers (the ΣΥΝΕΤΟΙ), but also with the men of fashion; as to critics of a lower class, it may be sufficient to transcribe, for their improvement, an unfinished remark, or rather maxim, which I found amongst our author's papers; and which he probably wrote on occasion of the common preference given to his Elegy. 'The *Gout de Comparaison* (as Bruyere styles it) is the only taste of ordinary minds. They do not know the specific excellency either of an author or a composition: for instance, they do not know that Tibullus spoke the language of Nature and Love; that Horace saw the vanities and follies of mankind with the most penetrating eye, and touched them to the quick; that Virgil ennobled even the most common images by the graces of a glowing, melodious, and well-adapted expression; but they do know that Virgil was a better poet than Horace; and that Horace's Epistles do not run so well as the Elegies of Tibullus.' * * *

ODE VII.

This ode, to which, on the title, I have given the epithet of *irregular*, is the only one of the kind which Mr. Gray ever wrote; and its being written occasionally, and for music, is a sufficient apology for the defect. Exclusive of this, (for a defect it certainly is), it appears to me, in point of lyrical arrangement and expression, to be equal to most of his other odes. It is remarkable that, amongst the many irregular odes which have been written in our own language, Dryden's and Pope's, on St. Cecilia's Day, are the only ones that may properly be said to have lived. The reason is (as it is hinted in a note on Let. 20. Sect. 4. of the Memoirs) that this mode of composition is so extremely easy, that it gives the writer an opening to every kind of poetical licentiousness: whereas the regularly repeated stanza, and still more the regular succession of strophe, antistrophe, and epode, put so strong a curb on the wayward imagination, that when she has once paced in it, she seldom chooses to submit to it a second time. It is therefore greatly to be wished, in order to stifle in their birth a quantity of compositions, which are at the same time wild and jejune, that regular odes, and these only, should be deemed legitimate amongst us.

The Cambridge edition (published at the expense of the University) is here followed; but I have added at the bottom of the page a number of explanatory notes, which this ode seemed to want, still more than that which preceded it; especially when given not to the University only, but the

public in general, who may be reasonably supposed to know little of the particular founders of different colleges and their history here alluded to. For the sake of uniformity in the page, I have divided the ode into stanzas, and discarded the musical divisions of recitative, air, and chorus; but shall here insert them in order, according as the different stanzas were set by Dr. Randal, Professor of Music.

Stanza 1. The first eight lines 'air,' the four last 'chorus.'

Stanza 2. 'Recitative' throughout, but accompanied at the sixth line.

Stanza 3. 'Air.'

This stanza, being supposed to be sung by Milton, is very judiciously written in the metre which he fixed upon for the stanza of his Christmas-hymn.

'Twas in the winter wild, &c.

Stanza 4. 'Recitative' throughout, the last nine lines accompanied.

Stanza 5. 'Air Quartetto.' The musical reader will easily see and admire how well this stanza is suited to that species of music.

Stanza 6. First six lines 'recitative;' the rest of the stanza, beginning at 'thy liberal heart,' 'air.'

Stanza 7. 'Recitative' throughout.

Stanza 8. 'Grand chorus,' and well suited for that purpose.

ODE VIII.

1. The occasion of Mr. Gray's writing (for it may be rather called so than versifying this and the three following odes, however closely he has done them) is given in the beginning of the 5th section of the Memoirs, and his reason for first publishing them in the 57th letter of the 4th. Their best comment, since it is the best illustration of their excellency, will be to insert here the Latin versions of the originals from whence they were taken; as it is probable that many readers, who have hitherto admired them as compositions, have not compared them with those literal versions for want of having the books (which are not common ones) at hand.

2. Ex Orcadibus Thormodi Torfæi. Hafniæ, 1697.

Late diffunditur
Ante stragem futuram
Sagittarum nubes:
Depluit sanguis:
Jam hastis applicatur
Cineracea
Tela virorum,
Quam amicæ texunt
Rubro subtegmine
Randveri mortis.

Texitur hæc tela
Intestinis humanis,
Staminique strictè alligantur
Capita humana,
Sunt sanguine roratæ
Hastæ pro insilibus,
Textoria instrumenta ferrea,

Ac sagittæ pro radiis:
Densabimus gladiis
Hanc victoriæ telam.

Prodeunt ad texendum Hilda,
Et Hiorthrimula,
Sangrida, et Swipula;
Cum strictis gladiis;
Hastile frangetur,
Scutum diffindetur,
Ensisque
Clypeo illidetur.

Texamus, texamus
Telam Darradar!
Hunc (gladium) rex juvenis
Prius possidebat.
Prodeamus,
Et cohortes intremus,
Ubi nostri amici
Armis dimicant!

Texamus, texamus
Telam * Darradi;
Et regi deinde
Deinde adhæreamus!
Ibi videbant
Sanguine rorata scuta
Gunna et gondula,
Quæ regem tutabantur.

Texamus, texamus
Telam Darradi!
Ubi arma concrepant

---

* So Thormodus interprets it, as though *Darradar* were the name of the person who saw this vision; but in reality it signifies a *range of spears*, from *daur* hasta, and *radir* ordo. G.

Bellacium virorum.
Non sinamus eum
Vitâ privari:
Habent Valkyriæ
Cædis potestatem.

Illi populi terras regent,
Qui deserta promontoria
Anteà incolebant.
Dico potenti regi
Mortem imminere.
Jam sagittis occubuit comes;

Et Hibernis
Dolor accidet,
Qui nunquam
Apud viros delebitur.
Jam tela texta est.
Campus verò (sanguine) roratus;
Terras percurret
Conflictus militum.

Nunc horrendum est
Circumspicere,
Cum sanguinea nubes
Per aëra volitet:
Tingetur aer
Sanguine virorum,
Antequam vaticinia nostra
Omnia corruant.

Benè canimus
De rege juvene,
Victoriæ carmina multa:
Benè sit nobis canentibus.
Discat autem ille,
Qui auscultat,
Bellica carmina multa,
Et viris referat.

Equitemus in equis,
Quoniam efferimus gladios strictos
Ex hoc loco.

In the argument of this ode, printed at the bottom of the page in this edition, it is said that the battle was fought on Christmas-day; on which Mr. Gray, in his manuscript, remarks, that 'the people of the Orkney islands were Christians, yet did not become so till after A. D. 966; probably it happened in 995: but though they, and the other Gothic nations, no longer worshipped their old divinities, yet they never doubted of their existence, or forgot their ancient mythology, as appears from the history of Olaus Tryggueson.' See Bartholinus, lib. viii. c. i. p. 615.

3. Iron-sleet of arrowy shower.—L. 3.

IMITATION.

How quick they wheel'd; and flying, behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy shower.
Mil. Par. Regained. G.

4. Hurtles in the darken'd air.—L. 4.

IMITATION.

The noise of battle hurtled in the air.
Shaks. Jul. Cæs. G.

ODE IX.

1. The Vegtams Kvitha, from Bartholinus, lib. iii. c. ii. p. 632.

Surgebat Odinus,
Virorum summus
Et * Sleipnerum
Ephippio stravit.
Equitabat deorsum
Niflhelam versus.
Obviàm habuit catellum
Ab Helæ habitaculis venientem;

Huic sanguine aspersa erant
Pectus anterius,
Rictus, mordendi avidus,
Et maxillarum infima:
Allatrabat ille,
Et rictum diduxit
Magiæ patri,
Et diu latrabat.

Equitavit Odinus
(Terra subtus tremuit)
Donec ad altum veniret
Helæ habitaculum.
Tum equitavit Odinus
Ad orientale ostii latus,
Ubi fatidicæ
Tumulum esse novit.

---

* Sleipner was the horse of Odin, which had eight legs. Vide Edda.

Sapienti carmina
Mortuos excitantia cecinit,
Boream inspexit,
Literas (tumulo) imposuit,
Sermones proferre cœpit,
Responsa poposcit,
Donec invita surgeret,
Et mortuorum sermonem proferret.

FATIDICA. Quisnam hominum
Mihi ignotorum
Mihi facere præsumit
Tristem animam?
Nive eram, et
Nimbo aspersa,
Pluviâque rorata:
Mortua diu jacui.

ODINUS. Viator nominor,
Bellatoris filius sum.
Enarra mihi, quæ apud Helam geruntur;
Ego tibi quæ in mundo.
Cuinam sedes auro stratæ sunt,
Lecti pulchri,
Auro ornati?

F. Hic Baldero medo
Paratus extat,
Purus potus,
Scuto superinjecto:
Divina verò soboles
Dolore afficietur.
Invita hæc dixi,
Jamque silebo.

O. Noli, fatidica, tacere.
Te interrogare volo,
Donec omnia novero.
Adhuc scire volo,
Quisnam Baldero

Necem inferet,
Ac Odini filium
Vitâ privabit?

F. Hodus excelsum fert
Honoratum fratrem illùc.
Is Baldero
Necem inferet,
Et Odini filium
Vitâ privabit.
Invita hæc dixi,
Jamque tacebo.

O. Noli tacere, fatidica,
Adhuc te interrogare volo,
Donec omnia novero.
Adhuc scire volo,
Quisnam Hodo
Odium rependet,
Aut Balderi interfectorem
Occidendo rogo adaptet?

F. Rinda filium pariet
In habitaculis occidentalibus:
Hic Odini filius,
Unam noctem natus, armis utetur;
Manum non lavabit,
Nec caput pectet,
Antequam rogo imponet
Balderi inimicum.
Invita hæc dixi,
Jamque tacebo.

O. Noli tacere, fatidica,
Adhuc te interrogare volo.
Quænam sint virgines,
Quæ præ cogitationibus lachrymantur,
Et in cœlum jaciunt
Cervicum pepla?
Hoc solum mihi dicas,
Nam prius non dormies.

F. Non tu viator es,
Ut antea credidi;
Sed potiùs Odinus,
Virorum summus.

O. Tu non es fatidica,
Nec sapiens fœmina,
Sed potius trium
Gigantum mater.

F. Equita domum, Odine,
Ac in his gloriare:
Nemo tali modo veniet
Ad sciscitandum,
Usque dum Lokus
Vinculis solvatur,
Et Deorum crepusculum
Dissolventes aderint.

2. Hela's drear abode.—L. 4.

Hela, in the Edda, is described with a dreadful countenance, and her body half flesh-colour and half blue. G.

3. Him the Dog of Darkness spied.—L. 5.

The Edda gives this dog the name of Managarmar; he fed upon the lives of those that were to die.

4. The thrilling verse that wakes the dead.—L. 24.

The original word is *vallgaldr*; from *valr* mortuus, and *galdr* incantatio. G.

Thrilling is surely in this place a peculiarly fine epithet.

5. Tell me what is done below.—L. 40.

Odin, we find both from this ode and the Edda, was solicitous about the fate of his son Balder, who had dreamed he was soon to die. The Edda

mentions the manner of his death when killed by Odin's other son Hoder; and also that Hoder was himself slain afterwards by Vali the son of Odin and Rinda, consonant with this prophecy.

6. Once again my call obey.
Prophetess, &c.—L. 51.

Women were looked upon by the Gothic nations as having a peculiar insight into futurity; and some there were that made profession of magic arts and divination. These travelled round the country, and were received in every house with great respect and honour. Such a woman bore the name of Volva Seidkona or Spakona. The dress of Thorbiorga, one of these prophetesses, is described at large in Eirick's Rauda Sogu, (apud Bartholin. lib. i. cap. iv. p. 688). She had on a blue vest, spangled all over with stones, a necklace of glass beads, and a cap made of the skin of a black lamb lined with white cat-skin. She leaned on a staff adorned with brass, with a round head set with stones, and was girt with an Hunlandish belt, at which hung her pouch full of magical instruments. Her buskins were of rough calf-skin, bound on with thongs studded with knobs of brass, and her gloves of white cat-skin, the fur turned inwards, &c. G.

They were also called *Fiolkyngi*, or *Fiol-kunnug*; i. e. Multiscia: and *Visindakona*; i. e. Oraculorum Mulier, *Nornir*; i. e. Parcæ. G.

7. What virgins these.—L. 75.

These were probably the Nornir or Parcæ, just now mentioned; their names were Urda, Verdandi, and Skulda; they were the dispensers of good destinies. As their names signify time past, present, and future, it is probable they were always invisible to mortals: therefore when Odin asks this question on seeing them, he betrays himself

to be a god; which elucidates the next speech of the prophetess.

8. Mother of the giant-brood.—L. 86.

In the Latin 'Mater trium gigantum.' He means, therefore, probably, Angerbode, who, from her name, seems to be 'no prophetess of good,' and who bore to Loke, as the Edda says, three children; the Wolf Fenris, the great Serpent of Midgard, and Hela, all of them called giants in that wild but curious system of mythology; with which, if the reader wishes to be acquainted, he had better consult the translation of M. Mallet's Introduction to the History of Denmark than the original itself, as some mistakes of consequence are corrected by the translator. The book is entitled, 'Northern Antiquities.' Printed for Carnan, 1770, 2 vols. 8vo.

ODE X.

Mr. Gray entitles this ode, in his own edition, a FRAGMENT; but from the prose version of Mr. Evans, which I shall here insert, it will appear that nothing is omitted, except a single hyperbole at the end, which I print in italics.

Panegyric upon Owain Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales, by Gwalchmei, the son of Melir, in the year 1157*.

---

* See Evans's Specimen of Welch Poetry, p. 25, and for the original Welch, p. 127.

1. I will extol the generous hero, descended from the race of Roderic, the bulwark of his country; a prince eminent for his good qualities, the glory of Britain, Owen the brave and expert in arms, a prince that neither hoardeth nor coveteth riches.

2. Three fleets arrived, vessels of the main; three powerful fleets of the first rate, furiously to attack him on the sudden: one from Jwerddon *; the other full of well-armed Lochlynians †, making a grand appearance on the floods; the third from the transmarine Normans, which was attended with an immense, though successless toil.

3. The Dragon of Mona's sons was so brave in action, that there was a great tumult on their furious attack; and before the prince himself there was vast confusion, havoc, conflict, honourable death, bloody battle, horrible consternation, and upon Tal Malvre a thousand banners; there was an outrageous carnage, and the rage of spears and hasty signs of violent indignation. Blood raised the tide of the Menäi, and the crimson of human gore stained the brine. There were glittering cuirasses, and the agony of gashing wounds, and the mangled warriors prostrate before the chief, distinguished by his crimson lance. Lloegria was put into confusion; the contest and confusion was great; *and the glory of our prince's wide-wasting sword shall be celebrated in an hundred languages to give him his merited praise.*

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* Ireland. † Danes and Normans.

ODE XI.

From the extract of the Gododin, which Mr. Evans has given us in his 'Dissertatio de Bardis,' in the foremention̄ed book, I shall here transcribe those particular passages which Mr. Gray selected for imitation in this ode.

1. Si mihi liceret vindictam in Dêirorum populum ferre,
Æquè ac diluvium omnes unâ strage prostrarem.

2. Amicum enim amisi incautus,
Qui in resistendo firmus erat.
Non petiit magnanimus dotem a socero
Filius CIANI ex strenuo Gwyngwn ortus.

3. Viri ibant ad *Cattraeth*, et fuêre insignes,
Vinum et mulsum ex aureis poculis erat eorum potus.
Trecenti et sexaginta tres aureis torquibus insigniti erant;
Ex iis autem, qui nimio potu madidi ad bellum properabant,
Non evasêre nisi tres, qui sibi gladiis viam muniebant;
Scilicet bellator de Acron, et Conanus Dacarawd,
Et egomet ipse (scilicet Bardus Aneurinus) sanguine rubens:
Aliter ad hoc carmen compingendum non superstes fuissem.

Whoever compares Mr. Gray's poetical versions of these four lyrical pieces with the literal translations which I have here inserted, will, I am persuaded, be convinced that nothing of the kind was ever executed with more fire, and at the

same time, more judgment. He keeps up through them all the wild romantic spirit of his originals; elevates them by some well-chosen epithet or image where they flag, yet in such a manner as is perfectly congruous with the general idea of the poems; and if he either varies or omits any of the original thoughts, they are only of that kind which, according to our modern sentiments, would appear vulgar or ludicrous: two instances of this kind occur in the latter part of this last ode. How well has he turned the idea of the fourth line: 'Ex iis qui nimio potu madidi!' and the conclusion, 'Aliter ad hoc carmen compingendum,' &c. The former of which is ridiculous; the latter insipid.

4. I find amongst Mr. Gray's papers a few more lines taken from other parts of the Gododin, which I shall here add with their respective Latin versions. They may serve to show succeeding poets the manner in which the spirit of these their ancient predecessors in the art may best be transfused into a modern imitation of them.

Have ye seen the tusky boar,
Or the bull, with sullen roar,
On surrounding foes advance?
So Caràdoc bore his lance.

Quando ad bellum properabat Caradocus,
Filius apri silvestris qui truncando mutilavit hostes,
Taurus aciei in pugnæ conflictu,
Is lignum (i. e. hastam) ex manu contorsit.

Conan's name, my lay, rehearse,
Build to him the lofty verse,
Sacred tribute of the bard,
Verse, the hero's sole reward.
As the flame's devouring force;
As the whirlwind in its course;

As the thunder's fiery stroke,
Glancing on the shiver'd oak;
Did the sword of Conan mow
The crimson harvest of the foe.

Debitus est tibi cantus qui honorem assecutus es maximum,
Qui eras instar ignis, tonitrui, et tempestatis,
Viribus eximie, eques bellicose, Rhudd Fedel, bellum meditaris.

SONNET.

If what Boileau says be true in his 'Art Poetique,' that

Un sonnet sans defauts vaut seul un long poeme—

the merit of this little poem is decided. It is written in strict observance of those strict rules, which the poet there lays down. Vide 'Art Poetique, Chant. ii. l. 82.' Milton, I believe, was the first of our English poets who exactly followed the Italian model: our author varies from him only in making the rhymes in the two first quartetts alternate, which is more agreeable to the English ear than the other method of arranging them.

EPITAPH I.

VARIATION. MS

1. After line 6, in the place of the four next—

> To hide her cares her only art,
> Her pleasure, pleasures to impart.
> In ling'ring pain, in death resign'd,
> Her latest agony of mind
> Was felt for him, who could not save
> His all from an untimely grave.

2. Whom what awaits, &c.—L. 11.

The construction here is a little hard, and creates obscurity, which is always least to be pardoned in an epitaph.

EPITAPH II.

This is as perfect, in its kind, as the foregoing sonnet. Sir William Williams, in the expedition to Aix, was on board the Magnanime with Lord Howe; and was deputed to receive the capitulation.

ELEGY,

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

1. The most popular of all our author's publications; it ran through eleven editions in a very short space of time; was finely translated into Latin by Messrs. Ansty and Roberts; and in the same year another, though I think inferior, version of it was published by Mr. Lloyd. The reader is informed, in the Memoirs, of the time and manner of its first publication. He originally gave it only the simple title of 'Stanzas, written in a Country Church-yard.' I persuaded him first to call it an ELEGY, because the subject authorised him so to do; and the alternate measure, in which it was written, seemed peculiarly fit for that species of composition. I imagined too that so capital a poem, written in this measure, would, as it were, appropriate it in future to writings of this sort; and the number of imitations which have since been made of it (even to satiety) seem to prove that my notion was well founded. In the first manuscript copy of this exquisite poem, I find the conclusion different from that which he afterwards composed; and though his after-thought was unquestionably the best, yet there is a pathetic melancholy in the four rejected stanzas, which highly claims preservation. I shall therefore give them as a variation in their proper place.

2. The knell of parting day.—L. 1.

IMITATION.

——————— squilla di lontano
Che paia 'l giorno pianger, che si muore.
Dante Purg. l. 8. G.

3. Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife.
Line 73.

VARIATION.

The thoughtless world to majesty may bow,
Exalt the brave, and idolize success;
But more to innocence their safety owe,
Than pow'r, or genius, e'er conspired to bless.

And thou, who mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these notes their artless tale relate,
By night and lonely contemplation led
To wander in the gloomy walks of fate:

Hark! how the sacred calm, that breathes around,
Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease;
In still small accents whispering from the ground,
A grateful earnest of eternal peace.

No more, with reason and thyself at strife,
Give anxious cares and endless wishes room;
But through the cool sequester'd vale of life
Pursue the silent tenor of thy doom.

And here the poem was originally intended to conclude, before the happy idea of the hoary-headed swain, &c. suggested itself to him. I cannot help hinting to the reader, that I think the third of these rejected stanzas equal to any in the whole Elegy.

4. Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.—L. 92.

IMITATION.

Ch' i veggio nel pensier, dolce mio fuoco,
Fredda una lingua, et due begli occhi chiusi
Rimaner doppo noi pien di faville.
Petrarch. Son. 169. G.

VARIATION.

Awake and faithful to her wonted fires.

Thus it stood in the first and some following editions, and I think rather better; for the authority of Petrarch does not destroy the appearance of quaintness in the other: the thought, however, is rather obscurely expressed in both readings. He means to say, in plain prose, that we wish to be remembered by our friends after our death, in the same manner as when alive we wished to be remembered by them in our absence: this would be expressed clearer, if the metaphorical term *fires* was rejected, and the line ran thus:

Awake and faithful to her first desires.

I do not put this alteration down for the idle vanity of aiming to amend the passage, but purely to explain it.

5. To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.—L. 100.

VARIATION.

On the high brow of yonder hanging lawn.

After which, in his first manuscript, followed this stanza:

Him have we seen the greenwood side along,
While o'er the heath we hied, our labour done,
Oft as the woodlark piped her farewell song,
With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.

I rather wonder that he rejected this stanza, as it not only has the same sort of Doric delicacy, which charms us peculiarly in this part of the poem, but also completes the account of his whole day: whereas, this evening scene being omitted, we have only his morning walk, and his noontide repose.

6. Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.
Line 116.

Between this line and the Epitaph Mr. Gray originally inserted a very beautiful stanza, which was printed in some of the first editions, but afterwards omitted; because he thought (and in my own opinion very justly) that it was too long a parenthesis in this place. The lines however are, in themselves, exquisitely fine, and demand preservation.

There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen are show'rs of violets found;
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.

7. There they alike in trembling hope repose.
L. 127.

IMITATION.

——————— paventosa speme.
Petrarch. Son. 114. G.

THE END.

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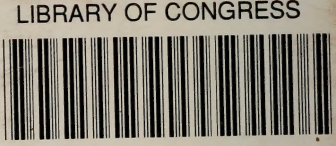

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